September 2002

NEA Today

The Magazine of the National Education Association

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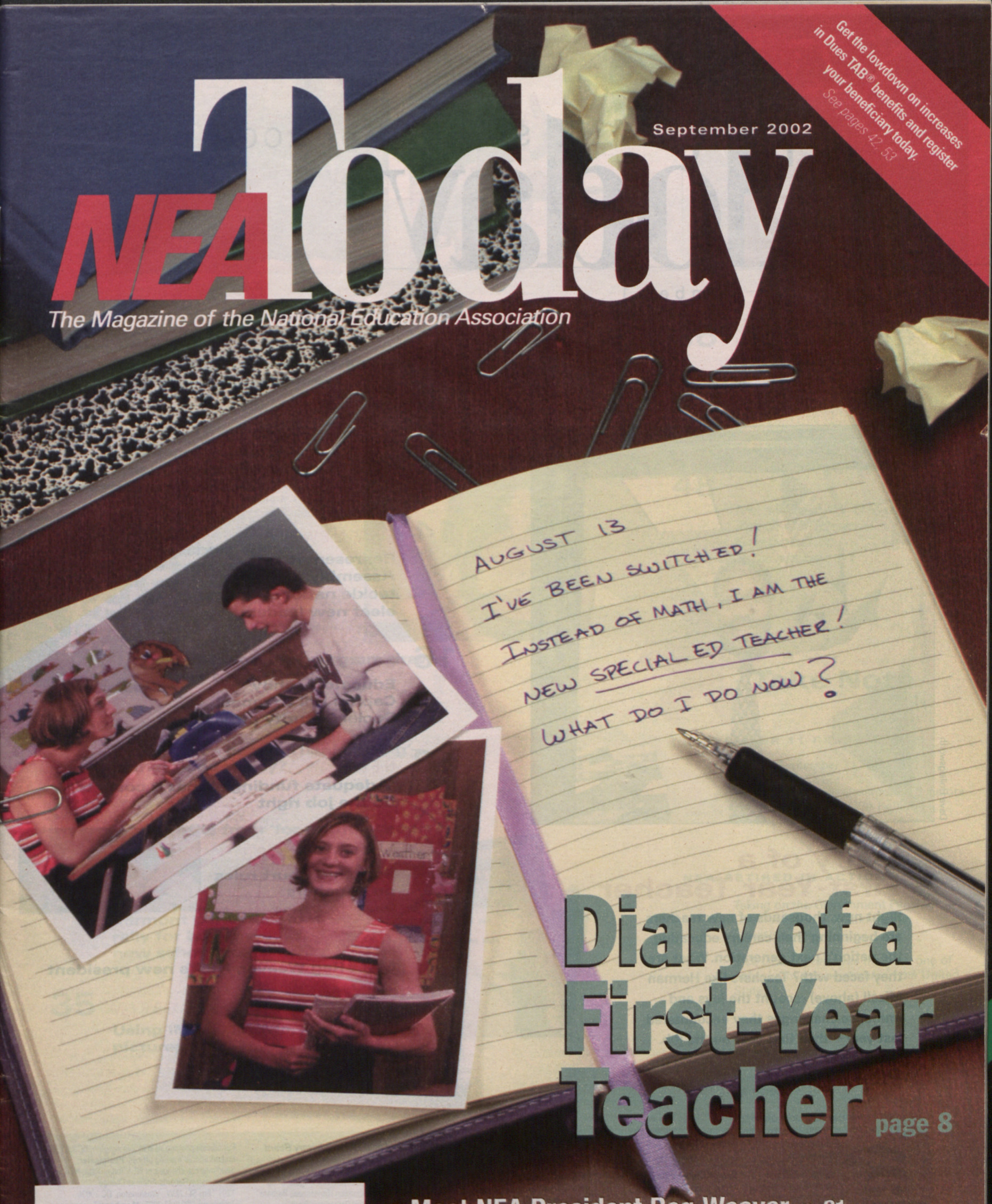

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September 2002

NEA Today

Volume 21 • Number 1

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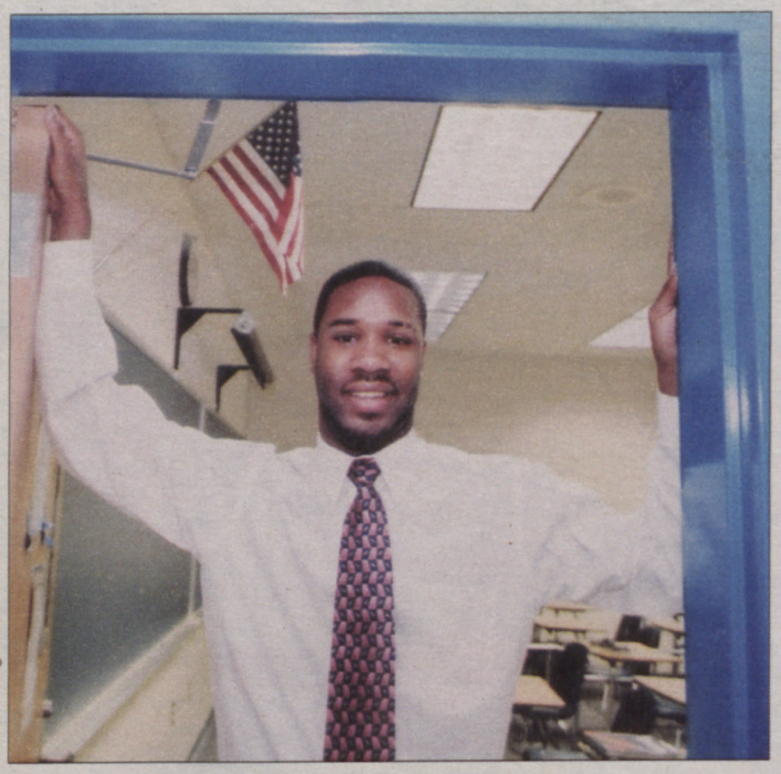

Dave Hollingsworth

Diary of a First-Year Teacher

Right now, thousands of new teachers are beginning their careers educating the nation's next generation. What are they faced with? Teachers like Herman Mizell (above) recount the joys and immense challenges they encountered last year—their first year on the job.
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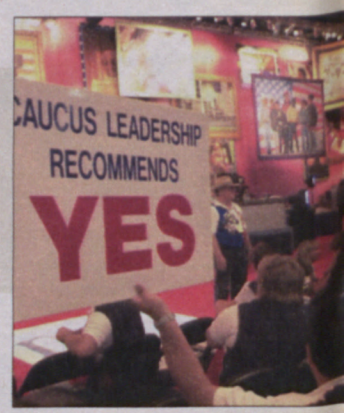

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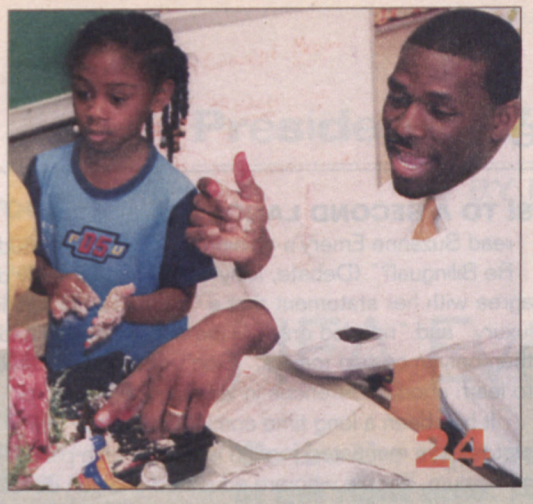

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Letters

THE REAL DEAL ON UNZ

In "English Lessons" (May 2002), *NEA Today* simplifies a much more complex issue and fails to accurately characterize some other major components of the Unz initiative against English-language learners in Massachusetts.

The initiative is at its heart anti-teacher. Teachers who use any native language in the classroom could be personally sued without the opportunity to be indemnified by their unions. Teachers can also lose their certification for five years.

Ronald Unz is setting a most dangerous precedent by crisscrossing the country making educational policy from the ballot box. Why do voters across the United States give this man so much power? He never spent a day in a classroom nor had to fight the daily battle teachers across the country fight in order to reach their children every day. Yet he uses his money to aggressively promote his initiative across the state, in some cases paying "consultants" to speak out in favor of it. Imagine how many other millionaires with nothing else to do lurk in the shadows conjuring up ideas to "fix" education.

Margaret Adams
Dedham, Massachusetts

HEALTH CARE FIX?

I just read the report on NEA's financial status by then NEA Secretary-Treasurer Dennis Van Roekel (May 2002). I am a 25+-year member of NEA from Wisconsin, where we are being ravaged by hyper-inflationary health care costs. Our premiums went up 25 percent last year and are to go up 35 percent next year, putting annual premiums for a family plan around $13,000. Needless to say, the future for teachers and taxpayers appears to be held hostage by health care providers, including drug companies, who are some of the most profitable corporations in our economy. If this same thing is not happening in other regions of the country, it's only a matter of time.

As a union we generate over a quarter billion dollars in revenue with 2.7 million members. But we, the members, are in a crisis. In Wisconsin we have a health insurance program sponsored by our teacher's union, Wisconsin Education Association Council, with about 160,000 members and their families insured. This is a very cost-effective and member-driven insurance plan with excellent benefits, but we are not big enough to have a major influence on these large health care and drug company corporations.

The only real solution to this crisis is to organize a large enough block (union) of customers to negotiate with these corporate providers. I read recently that we are entering a new world order. As I see it, we as a union can go along, quietly checking our mutual fund reports—or we can act in the spirit of our founders and stand tall on this global stage.

Jeff Horner
River Falls, Wisconsin

SÍ TO A SECOND LANGUAGE

I read Suzanne Emery's opinion in "Should All Students Be Bilingual?" (Debate, May 2002) and strongly disagree with her statement that a "second language is a luxury" and "needed only for the college bound and then only in certain majors." Don't all students deserve to learn about differences in language and culture?

It has been a long time coming, but finally many states have mandated foreign language as a part of the curriculum. People who are educated and can develop an appreciation in these differences are less likely to form prejudices and intolerance against them. Especially in times like these, aren't these important lessons to share with all of our children?

Kathleen Owens
Fairfield, New Jersey

We live in a fast-changing, technologically sophisticated, and politically complex world. Mastery of a second language is no longer a scholarly distinction or a skill restricted to the educated elite but a tool used daily in science and business. The inclusion of both classical and modern languages in school fosters a sense of humanity; it increases employment opportunities; and it assists students in adapting to the multiethnic environments and value orientations of others within our society.

Chris Lensch

New Jersey now has core curriculum content standards requiring all public school students to take a language as an integral part of the K-12 experience. Studying and mastering world languages endows our students with a second soul while giving them the background for responsible adult citizenship, regardless of vocation choice.

Julio G. Verdecia
West Caldwell, New Jersey

I was terribly disturbed by Suzanne Emery's lumping of suicide prevention with "the other mandates that politically correct states and school districts impose: cultural holidays, parenting classes, good health activities, well-rounded social growth, adequate physical activities, [and] proper nutrition."

I only hope Emery will be open-minded enough (since she seems to detest being so politically correct) to read Douglas Ward's piece. The nation and the world need more teachers like him. He is a colleague after my own educator's heart.

Faith Mowoe
Rialto, California

Suzanne Emery contends that a second language is only useful in certain majors. In which major is it *not* useful? Business? Do we not conduct business internationally, even if our business is small and family-owned? Education? How many of us work with students that have arrived from another country? Medicine? Law? Clients and patients are not all English-speaking. Journalism? Don't journalists (foreign and domestic) need to be able to communicate with a variety of individuals?

Is a second language needed only for the college bound? I am a second language teacher, and my students are not all going to college. They work in a host of service-oriented jobs, where they often use Spanish with customers

Now that Emergy is retired, I hope she can travel to other countries. And in each country I hope she tries to make a purchase, or needs emergency help, or simply asks for directions from someone who believes, like she, that a second language is *only* for the college bound, and *only* for certain majors.

Rae LaMarche
Springfield, Oregon

THIS BONUS WON'T WORK

In an answer to your question about colleagues who don't pull their own weight (Dilemma, May 2002), Frank "Kiko" Chavez suggests giving $100 to those who go a whole semester without using a sick day. Mr. Chavez's plan would make non-Christians choose between taking off for religious observances and a bonus. It would also force teachers with children to send their kids to school when they are sick.

Being at school every day does not solve the problem of pulling your own weight. There are many people who show up every day and just get a paycheck. Mr. Chavez's plan would be good—if teachers were all Christian or got days off for every religious holiday; if teachers were all single, without children (*and* never needed a holiday); and, of course, if teachers never got sick. In other words, his plan cannot work.

Mace Bravin
Tucson, Arizona

BIGGER, NOT BETTER

In "If I Wrote the Law" (May 2002), one writer answered, "No student should be in a high school with more than 1,000 kids." In the 1950s I was a member of the Education Council, a research group of the Ohio Education Association. We attempted to evaluate success in college (measured by grades) as it related to the size of the high school a student attended. We only got data from Ohio's state universities, but it showed that students achieved best if they had attended a high school whose population ranged from 250 to 500.

The Council members concluded that institutions this size could provide a fairly well-rounded program. Probably of more importance: there was less incidence of students "falling through the cracks," because students and teachers functioned a lot like family. Unfortunately, we never saw any evidence that the results of our study have been recognized. "Bigger and better" has been the theme through the years.

Floyd R. West
Binghamtom, New York

LOVE THAT UNIFORM

After reading the debate on public school mandated uniforms (Debate, April 2002), I was deeply disturbed. In particular, I find placing parochial schools in the same category as prisons and boot camps to be terribly offensive.

Growing up, I moved several times and attended seven different schools—some public, some private. I cannot remember any

instances of physical fighting at my parochial schools. At three different public high schools, though, fights were not uncommon and often were somewhat brutal. I am not saying that uniforms solely contribute to the difference, but I think that wearing uniforms is one of many factors that contribute to student behavior.

Instead of continuing to condone offensive and dangerous behavior on the basis that every student is an individual with different needs, why not teach kids respect and that there are repercussions for their actions. Children need to understand that everything in life is not a choice. Sometimes you have to do what you're told.

Sara Poppish
Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania

NO CHILD LEFT? NO WAY

It's early 2004. Athletes all over the world are putting the final polish on their training for the Athens Olympics. Then the IOC issues a policy statement for the games: "No Runner Left Behind." Chaos ensues.

It sounds pretty stupid, doesn't it? It's also impossible. Sadly, so is the literal meaning of "No Child Left Behind" (Cover, March 2002). That cannot be. We live in the real world, not Lake Wobegon "where all children are above average." There are myriad factors that can lead to a child being "left behind." We, as educators, cannot unmake those factors, wish them away, or fully compensate for them.

Perhaps what the Bush Administration means is "no child will be left behind through a failure on the part of the educational establishment." That's reasonable. Just cut class sizes in half (or, better still, put two trained adults in each classroom); repair all the decrepit schools; fully fund all programs; staff, modernize, and stock school libraries; pay teachers a living wage; and have a new textbook for each child—then we can probably make sure that no child falls behind through lack of effort or resources on our part.

Karl Smith
Richmond, California

Let's Talk

Share your ideas, comments, and opinions with NEA Today in one of five ways:

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Letters are edited for length and clarity.

JUNK THE JUNK FOOD

Having just read the column regarding whether junk food should be allowed in schools (Debate, March 2002), I feel compelled to address the educator who responded yes.

As a health care professional with 23 years of experience, I can tell you that banning cola and candy will not cause a medical hardship to any student. On the contrary, allowing the prominent sale of these items is a contributing factor to a growing epidemic of childhood obesity in our country.

Adult onset diabetes (linked with obesity) is now affecting our youth with a tenfold increase in 20 years. Between 1965-96, the sale of pop has increased 300 percent, while milk consumption decreased by 36 percent. There is hypocrisy in having what children learn in the classroom regarding nutrition end as soon as they enter the cafeteria.

Janalee Stock, R.N.
Athens, Ohio

Those concerned about increasing cholesterol levels and type 2 diabetes in children know that children should have only healthy choices in school cafeterias. Milk is healthy if low-fat kinds are used. It is digested as a balanced food, as it contains proteins, carbohydrates, and fats. Many children who cannot digest milk can digest cheese, yogurt, and cottage cheese.

Instead of knocking the value of milk, let's get together and ask the federal government to allow soy or goat's milk in the schools, too, so that the few who cannot drink cow's milk can have healthy alternatives.

Beverly Giberson
Renton, Washington

RETIREMENT QUANDARY

Thank you for your article on Social Security offsets, "Retiring on Next to Nothing" (February 2002). Junita Drisko, who was featured in the article is a Maine teacher. I also taught in Maine for 16 years. When I started planning my retirement I found out about the Government Pension Offset/Windfall Elimination Provision. Upon writing letters to our state Association paper, *The Main Educator*, I received a huge response from others who were as disbelieving as I was initially. Maine teachers who are affected by these laws have taken an active role in politically advocating for change.

Maine has proved that there is political power in numbers, and it's good to see that at last active teachers are being informed through our national publication of what the government is going to do to some of their planned retirement money.

Mary Ella Bergmann
Bridgeton, New Jersey

President's Viewpoint

BY REG WEAVER

NEA Everywhere

We are the right people, in the right places, at the right time. And we have the right ideas for public education.

I wish first to thank the delegates to the 2002 Representative Assembly for their trust and confidence in electing me NEA President. I am committed to doing all that I can to ensure that our Association steps forward as a focused, united, member-driven, image-enhanced, community-involved, and politically bipartisan leader in the fight to ensure a quality public education for *all* children and students.

Today's education landscape dictates that we get right down to business. The opponents of public education are engaged in a crusade to destroy trust and confidence in America's public schools. The urgency of this threat dictates that we move beyond polite conversations to meaningful action. We must mobilize an unprecedented response to public education's unprecedented challenges.

The Supreme Court's decision this summer has energized the advocates of vouchers. The Court has given the green light to privatizing public education—turning the education of our children into a commercial, for-profit concern. Let us be clear: Vouchers are bad public policy, and we are steadfast in our resolve to stop the voucher movement through community and political advocacy. We were not successful in the Supreme Court, but we will succeed in the court of public opinion—a court that convenes in our neighborhoods and communities, and whose verdict will carry the day.

"Our vision is that every public school will be as good as our best public schools."

This year, we have been presented with a new federal education law—the so-called "Leave No Child Behind Act"—that was developed largely without the input of teachers and support professionals on the front lines. We propose a different approach to education reform: Reform developed collaboratively with those who will be held accountable for its success. Reform that is developed with us, not for us. Reform that will truly succeed in leaving no child behind.

My friends, we are 2.7 million members strong—one in every 100 Americans. NEA is everywhere. We are the mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, grandparents, aunts, and uncles in the communities of the very policymakers who have neglected to consult us, to respect us, to support us. We need to seize every opportunity to educate our communities as to who we are as an Association and what we stand for. We must enlist our communities in our defense of public education. And when they respond with active support for public education—especially on Election Day—then we will see positive results from our policymakers.

We offer a powerful vision—a vision that is at the heart of the American dream: the right of every child to a quality public education, free from fear or intimidation, in an atmosphere that is conducive to learning. In other words, our vision is that every public school will be as good as our best public schools.

NEA has tremendous potential. We have vast untapped human resources. Now is the time for NEA to become energized, mobilized, and organized. Now is the time for us to flex our full potential as individual members and as a united Association. We are the right people, in the right places, at the right time. And we have the right ideas for lifting up struggling public schools—and for making better the schools where most of us work.

Again, thank you for choosing me to lead our great Association. It is a great honor. Together we will face great challenges in the years ahead. But I believe with all my heart that when our NEA family is focused and united, there is nothing we cannot accomplish.

Comments? E-mail Reg Weaver at RegWeaver@nea.org.

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Life in a Jar

Kansas students carry out a Holocaust investigation that is making headlines.

BY NORMAN CONARD

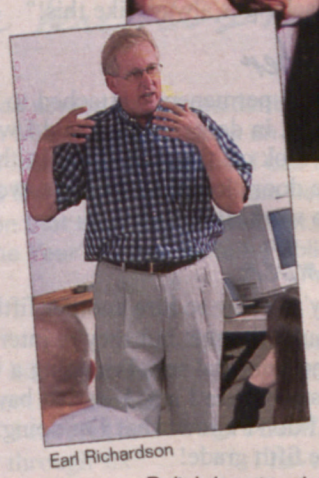
In the fall of 1999, I encouraged four of my students to work on a project that would demonstrate our classroom motto, "He who changes one person, changes the world entire."

They came across an old magazine article about a woman named Irena Sendler who saved 2,500 children from the Warsaw Ghetto. Sendler, a non-Jewish social worker, went into the Ghetto and talked Jewish parents into giving her their children, telling them that otherwise, they would all die. She smuggled the children past the Nazi guards and got them adopted into Polish homes.

Sendler put lists of the children's names in jars and buried them in her garden so that someday she could find the children and tell them their real identities. The Nazis captured her and beat her, but the underground bribed a guard to let her go. After the war, she dug up the jars.

My students wrote a play telling this story called *Life in a Jar*. They performed for many groups in our community, which has little diversity—there are no Jewish students in our school district.

Searching for Irena's final resting place, they discovered that she was still alive, living in poverty in Warsaw. They started taking a jar to performances to collect money for Irena, which they sent to her through a bank in Warsaw.



Earl Richardson

The students began corresponding with Irena, assisted by a local Polish student who translated the letters. "Your work continues the effort I started over 50 years ago," Irena wrote.

The students and their play have received national publicity. I have watched the emotion pour from the audience when they perform. They have brought our class motto to life.

I chose some of these students for this project because of their own difficult life situations. One girl was abandoned by her parents at the age of seven. Another has a mother with cancer. A third student turned out to be a great choice, although I didn't know it then. She found out her great-grandmother was Jewish and in a death camp, but survived.

After one show, a Jewish educator and businessman offered to raise the money to send the students to Poland to meet Irena, who was then 91 and in poor health. So in May 2001, we traveled to Warsaw to meet the rescuer and some of the thousands of children she saved.

We landed in a frenzy of media attention in the wake of a two-page story in Poland's largest daily paper. The Polish press dubbed the girls "The Sendlerova Quartet."

The journey took on special significance because of a recently published book about a town where Polish residents brutally killed their Jewish neighbors in 1941. This book caused a painful national debate. Our girls arrived at a time when Poland needed to hear about a Polish heroine. Irena Sendler was impacting Poland, even in her 90s, through four students from Kansas.

Debra Stewart

Norm Conard (left) and his students "landed in a frenzy of media attention" when they flew to Warsaw to meet a heroine of World War II.

When the girls met Irena, she told us stories, cried with us, and laughed with us. She keeps a picture of the four girls by her bedside. She says they are her heroes.

We also met a woman who was rescued by Irena at five months. She showed us a silver spoon with her date of birth and name on it. Her mother put the spoon in her crib just before a rescuer took her away. The parents died at Treblinka.

We saw the prison where Irena was tortured and the garden where she buried the jars. We met a woman leaning over the fence who had hidden three Jews in her home.

I will always remember the rainy day when we left Warsaw and Irena, waving from her window, tears rolling down her cheeks.

We went to Poland to understand this lady's story, but we left still not able to imagine the courage it took for her and others to "walk into the valley of death" and return "with the children of life."

Our team has grown to 15 members, doing more research, trying to keep up with our correspondence, and working on the play. We are booked months in advance and have been invited to perform at the Krakow Festival in 2003.

The project took on new power with the events of September 11. National Public Radio in Kansas was broadcasting *Life in a Jar* that morning, and many people called to say they would not have made it through the day without this wonderful story.

Irena Sendler stood up to the terrible forces of evil in 1941. "If you see a person drowning," she told us, "you must jump into the water to save them, whether you can swim or not." ✔

Norman Conard teaches at Uniontown High School, Uniontown, Kansas. Learn more about the Sendler project at www.mff.org or e-mail lsendler@hotmail.com.

Twenty years ago the first issue of *NEA Today* featured all black and white images shot on negative film.

This year, for the first time, more than half of the images you see in this issue of *NEA Today* were shot by photographers using digital cameras. No film, no processing, no problem.

Well, that's only partially true. Although digital images can be viewed in the camera as soon as the photos are taken, they're not guaranteed to be of the quality that four-color publications like ours demand.

Bill Fischer
editor

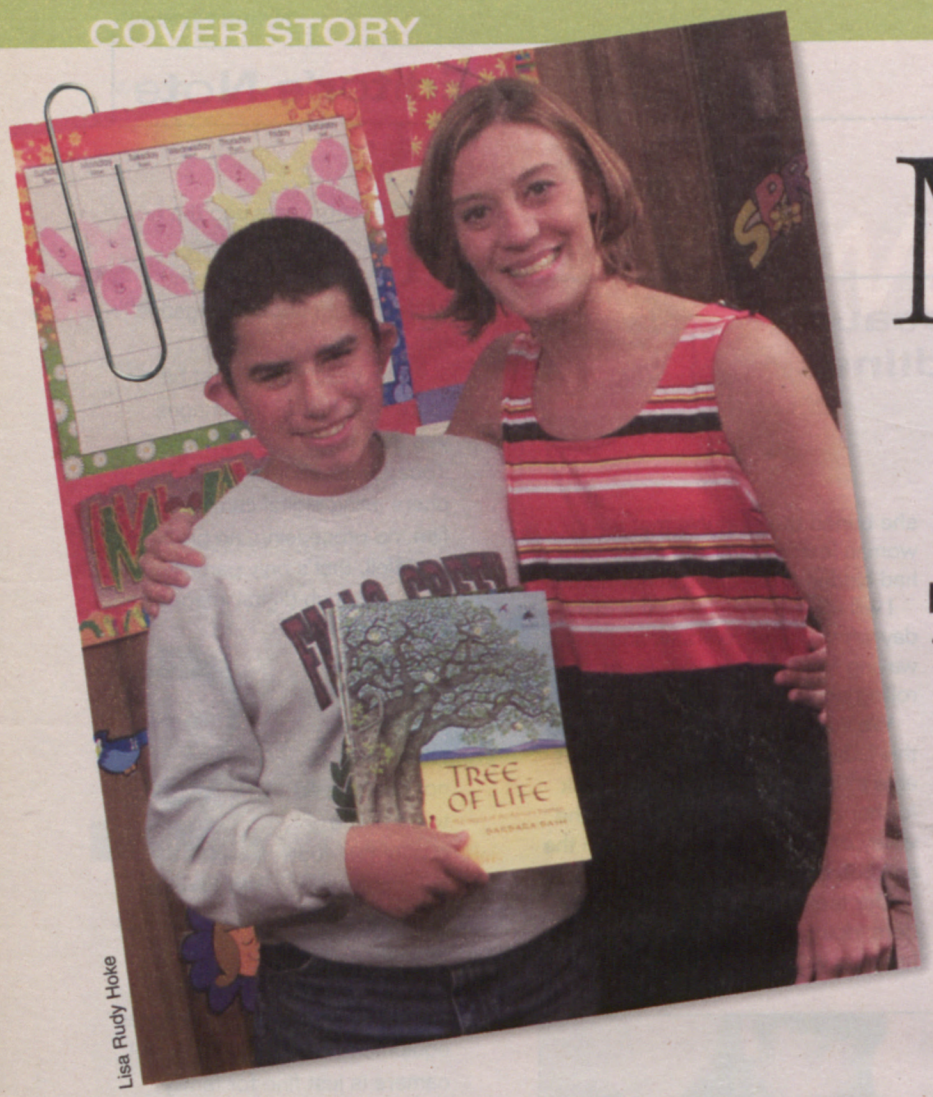
A lot of factors come into play, including the type of digital equipment used. A $150 digital camera is just fine for family photos that can be easily turned into prints or e-mailed to family members. But to get top-of-the-line color photos requires top-of-the-line equipment—and the right person behind the camera.

Digital photos are especially valuable when publications—like ours—are up against a deadline. More than a few times we've contacted a photographer in the morning; the photographer shoots the images with a digital camera in early afternoon; and by late afternoon we're at the computer here at NEA, looking over an array of digital photos. With a few clicks, they're ready to go into the pages of *NEA Today* or one of our other publications.

At the NEA Annual Meeting held last July in Dallas, two photographers shot more than 5,000 digital images of NEA members conducting the business of the Association. In the past, most of these photos would have been shot on traditional color negative film. That required processing around 100 rolls of film and keeping track of all the prints and negatives that were processed—a time-consuming task.

This year, nearly the entire photographic record of the RA will be preserved in digital files on a set of eight or nine compact disks.

Bill Fischer



Lisa Rudy Hoke

My First Year

Right now, thousands of new teachers are beginning their careers educating the nation's next generation. What are they faced with? *NEA Today* collected reflections of teachers who just completed their first year on the job.

I'VE BEEN SWITCHED! THE STUDENTS ARRIVE IN TWO DAYS AND NOW I AM THE NEW SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER!

Missy Conner Stricklin was the NEA Student Program chair in Oklahoma before accepting a job at the Coyle Public School in the small town of Coyle, Oklahoma.

August

School starts in two weeks! I'm teaching Title I math, and I'm extremely excited because I am a math nut! But my room started out with nothing but two chalkboards and students' desks. I didn't even have books. Luckily, Mom [who retired after 27 years of teaching] gave me her supplies. Other teachers offered supplies, too, so now I have manipulatives, math games, and workbooks ready. The school didn't even have a desk for me, but Mom came to my rescue and lent me a huge teacher's desk.

❧ ❧ ❧

I've been switched! The students arrive in two days, and now I am the new special education teacher. Am I trained for this? No way!

September

My aide, Heather Long, is amazing. She's from this area so she's watched the kids grow up and knows their families. The kids look at her as a teacher. She's my professional colleague, and my friend. I can cry with her; I can tell her anything.

October

One of my students, Brian, wouldn't talk at first and never picked up his head. But we're beginning to get somewhere. I'm enthusiastic and kind of loud in the classroom. I like to have fun, and that seems to be bringing him out. Now he says, "Good morning."

❧ ❧ ❧

I have a student who is very defiant, so I was sent to a workshop to learn how to deal with him. But the workshop leader's suggestions were no different from what I am already doing. So I asked the traveling miracle man what to do if none of those ideas work. He said I had the wrong personality for the classroom. I took offense. I said I was very happy with who I was, and all my other students are making progress because of my personality. Then my principal jumped on and agreed with him that maybe it was me who needed to change. I do not ever get angry, but I did this time!! For seven years, no teacher has succeeded with this child and all of a sudden it is my fault. I'm looking for a new job.

❧ ❧ ❧

I went to the Oklahoma Education Association convention and saw a lot of people I knew from being on the board of directors last year. They all encouraged me and said, "Don't think teaching is always like this!"

November

Brian is permanently attached to his coat—he won't take it off. Finally, in desperation, I said I would stand in the closet until he took off the coat. I was in there maybe five minutes, with the door closed, in the dark, wondering whether it was going to work. It did!

December

They're going to hire another fifth-grade teacher. I figured they would hire me, but they're interviewing people from outside! The principal says I'm doing a wonderful job, so I should stay where I am. I started bawling! I said, "I need out of this. I don't know what I'm doing." Finally, she said I could have the fifth grade!

❧ ❧ ❧

Today, driving home for Christmas break, I got a call on my cell phone from the principal: She can't find anybody to take my class, so I have to stay! I told my Mom I'm quitting. I'll get a job in journalism or public relations. I'm out of here.

But she says I should stick it out. If I stay the year, I can get my teaching license. If I leave, I lose the time I've put in. I guess Mother knows best.

January

I'm back from Christmas break. If I'm going to do this, I'll try to do it right. I saw *Rain Man* on television. Brian is my little Rain Man! I was told he was retarded, but after much work and many crazy ideas, he has started to communicate his love for math. When we started, he was adding one-digit numbers with blocks. Now, he's doing multiplication tables in his head! I don't think a mentally retarded student could make

such a miraculous change so fast. I think he has been miscategorized for 11 years. I'm doing some research—I think he is autistic and can be helped.

February

I've never seen children like this. One minute they are kicking me, cussing and screaming, and the next minute it's "Miss S., I love you, you're my favorite teacher!"

April

After many months of frustration, I finally picked up the paperwork for receiving my teacher's license from the office. Next month, I will have completed my entry year. I am so grateful for the support of my mother and grandmother [both retired teachers]. They laughed, cried, and vented with me any time I needed it, and it always made me feel a little bit better.

When I picked up the forms, I also turned in my resignation. I'll find another teaching job for next year.

May

I couldn't attend the last day of school. I had already said goodbye to my students. Afterward, my aide told me my autistic boy grabbed a piece of paper and started writing my name. When he got past the Mrs. part, he started to cry and told her he wished I would not go. I started crying on the phone! This little boy never showed emotion before. I want to stay in contact with him. I hope I can continue to help him get better.

June

I have accepted a new job teaching at a junior high school near here, and I am already planning my classes. I am excited to be back in an area that I am certified in and comfortable teaching: Math!! ✔

What's NEA got for new teachers?

New teachers—many of them excellent!—are often left to sink or swim. NEA offers them a lifeline, in the form of programs, resources, and national campaigns to strengthen the profession.

■ The NEA UniServ Program supports state and local staff who deliver services to NEA members. Says NEA's Kathy Trobridge. "If you run into trouble on the job, this Association staff person will at a minimum try to help you understand the situation. You won't be facing it alone."

"The UniServ program has done an outstanding job in representing our members on the local level," says NEA President Reg Weaver. "And it's crucial that UniServ directors continually evaluate member needs so they can offer the kinds of services most beneficial to them." Local Associations have stepped up efforts—through bargaining, politics, and public pressure—to get districts to provide better programs to help first-year teachers become successful, confident educators.

To contact your local Association, ask which of your colleagues is a building representative or contact your state Association for the field staff member who serves your school district.

■ The NEA Student Program, whose members are college students preparing to enter the profession, works to strengthen the education and training these students receive and readies them for the classroom through mentors, workshops, grants, and more. OK, it may be a little late for first-year teachers—but they can tell classmates still in school about this great resource. For more info, visit www.nea.org/students/.

■ NEA plays a major role in the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (www.ncate.org), which accredits schools with teacher preparation programs based on research-based standards.

■ NEA also helped create—and remains actively involved in—the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (www.nbpts.org), a group that sets benchmarks of quality teaching and offers certification in 24 fields. A good resource to at least compare yourself against when you run across the question: "What's 'quality' teaching?"

■ Check www.nea.org regularly for information. This could help *you!*

"My first day, I walked into class and said, "He be trippin'" is not acceptable here. It's 'he is tripping.'"

Four years after serving as senior class president at Lakeland High School in Suffolk, Virginia, Herman Mizell came back as an English teacher. "For years, we black men have been looked upon as what I call the four D's: Dumb, Deviant, Dangerous, and Defiant," he says. "I am here to dispel the myth and prove to these young men that their future does not lie in a jail cell." Mizell was named "Rookie of the Year" for the Suffolk Public Schools.

September

My first day, I walked into class and said, "'He be trippin'" is not acceptable here. It's 'he is tripping.'" I covered how to conjugate "to be" through six tenses in standard English. I tell them, "You have to code switch. There's nothing wrong with using non-standard English among your peers, but when you come to school, use the accepted language."

❧❧❧

I've started an "English tea party" for students to get extra help after school. I called it that to lure the students in. They ask, "Mr. Mizell, are we having tea?"

"Sure, we're having tea." But when they get there, they find out we're not having tea—we're going over literature and grammar.

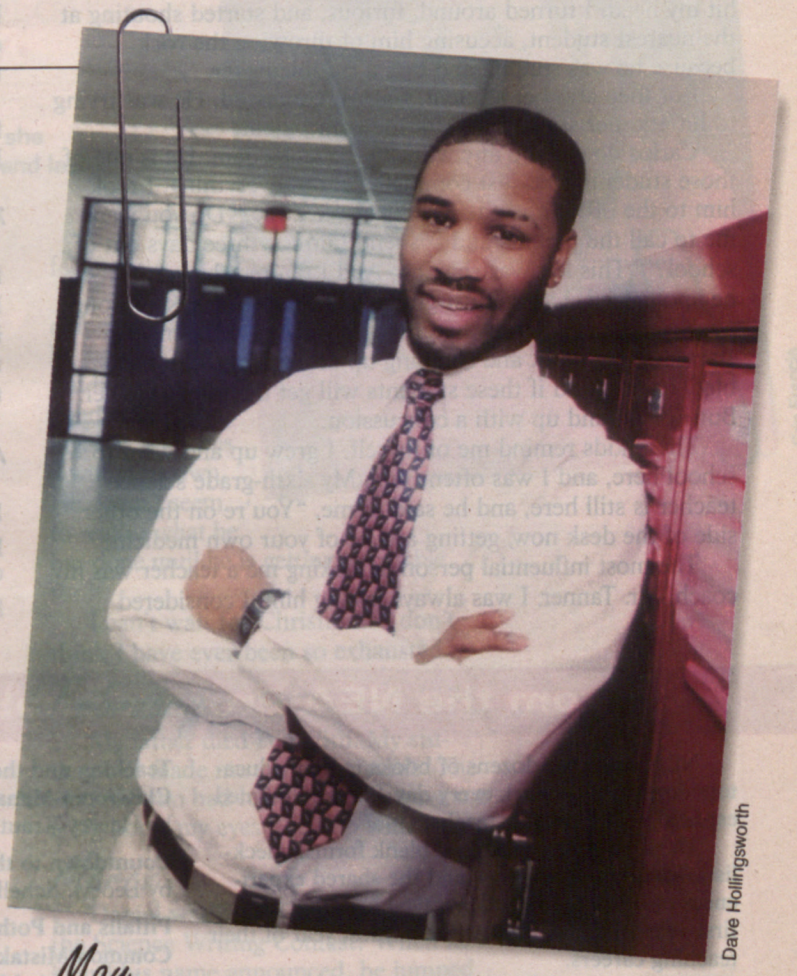
December

I have a student who is making Fs. He comes to class and sleeps. Then I get a note that says he's not in school any more. He got put in night school, I assume because of a behavior problem.

January

My F student came back from night school and said to me, "Mr. Mizell, can I still pass your class?"

I said, "Sure, but you have to show me you're trying. You wasted the first semester." Now he's alert and he's making straight A's!



Dave Hollingsworth

May

A freshman who comes to my English tea party asked me, "Mizell, are you going to be here next year?"

I said, "I may, I may not." And he said, "Well, we need you." ✔

Edited by Alain Jehlen. To protect student privacy, all student names have been changed.

"These kids remind me of myself. I went to school here, and I was often rude."

Dave Gatley

George Ortiz, a former recreation leader and coach in Commerce, California, near East Los Angeles, got his baptism of fire when he started his career as a teacher last fall at Laguna Nueva Elementary School.

August

Sitting behind the desk the first day and hearing my name as "Mr. Ortiz" gave me a feeling of accomplishment. The students from the playground know me and respect me. But there are also students who are seeing me for the first time: Here is this 6-foot-2-inch teacher with a shaved head—they don't know what to expect. One student, Rico, was making rude comments about me out loud in Spanish to another student, not knowing I could understand them. Finally, I introduced myself to him in Spanish. His jaw dropped. I think I've passed my first test.

❧ ❧ ❧

We've been doing a unit on how to test a scientific hypothesis. We did a juggling drill and I told them, "If you do it 10 times each day from Monday to Friday, is the number of catches that you can make going to increase or decrease?" Of course, it's going to increase. This should be so easy, little kids could do it. Seventh and eighth graders shouldn't have a problem doing it. But they did not understand. I ended up taking a month on that assignment.

I'm finding out that even when you know the material 100 percent, you still have to learn how to teach it.

September

I was walking to my classroom, and all of a sudden a rock hit my head. I turned around, furious, and started shouting at the nearest student, accusing him of throwing the rock because he was smiling and he's a troublemaker.

But then another student, Carlos, confessed. He was trying to hit another student and hit me by accident.

Carlos doesn't do any work in the classroom. He is one of those students who just complains about everything. I took him to the office and the principal asked me, "Do you want me to call the parents and suspend him for three days out of school?" This kid was shaking. And I figured, he confessed, he apologized. I said, "Just give him an in-house suspension."

He came back after that a totally different student. He started doing work and showing up more. Hey, I'll take a blow to the head if these students will get their act together. But I could end up with a concussion.

These kids remind me of myself. I grew up and went to school here, and I was often rude. My sixth-grade science teacher is still here, and he said to me, "You're on the other side of the desk now, getting a taste of your own medicine."

The most influential person in making me a teacher was my coach, Mr. Tanner. I was always testing him. I considered myself a bully, and I wanted to know how much I could get away with. But he saw something in me. He put me in my place, and I became one of his better athletes. He got me into sports and sports got me out of trouble.

October

We were doing a baseball lesson, and Rico wanted to throw the ball real hard to this other kid, who did not know how to catch. And Rico said that really loud. I was so upset, I ran up to him in front of the whole class and started yelling at him. He got scared. I told him, "Go sit down, you are benched today."

January

Nothing was working with Rico. He was making fun of people and not doing work. It was horrible. But the other day after winter break, I asked him how his vacation was. He made a comment that was inappropriate. He was expecting to be in trouble, but to me it was funny. And to the other students it was funny. After he saw me laugh, he did his work that day, and now he's doing better.

He likes to be the class clown, and I was punishing him for that, but in reality this kid is very smart. So now, I'm just letting him be sometimes.

April

Rico is moving, and he's bummed out. So am I. I was the first one he told. First, he asked, "What do you think of Pico Rivera?" I said, "It's not a bad area. Why?" He said his family is going to Pico Rivera and asked if I knew any teachers over there. I told him it's a good school, and I do know some teachers.

May

My students have just finished a neat solar system report. I gave them an example of how to do it. I think that was the problem with the juggling project I did at the beginning—I didn't give them an example. This time, they did some really good quality work. They've improved 100 percent. ✔

Help from the NEA Professional Library

NEA publishes dozens of books to help educators do their best work every day. Six are designed especially for first-year teachers.

These books include tips, blank forms, checklists, sample lesson plans, and the shared experiences of other teachers—practical help that can get first-year teachers through the hardest year of their teaching careers.

They give specific suggestions for how to deal with disruptive students, how to write a lesson plan, how to deal with parents—the nuts and bolts that make the difference between a successful, satisfying first year and a nightmare.

The First-Year Teacher
by Karen Bosch and Katharine Kersey
for K-8 teachers

Teaching and the Art of Successful Classroom Management
by Harvey Kraut for secondary school teachers

Countdown to the First Day of School
by Leo M. Schell and Paul Burden

Pitfalls and Potholes: A Checklist for Avoiding Common Mistakes of Beginning Teachers
by Barbara A. Murray and Kenneth T. Murray

Bright Ideas: A Pocket Mentor for Beginning Teachers by Mary C. Clement

The Discipline Checklist: Advice from 60 Successful Elementary Teachers
by Ken Kosier

EXCERPT

From *Bright Ideas: A Pocket Mentor for Beginning Teachers*
A classroom management checklist:

- ❑ Greet students at the door, saying hello and making small talk. Try shaking hands at the door every Monday.
- ❑ Have routines that students follow every day.
- ❑ Maintain eye contact with students and develop a "teacher stare" that can stop potential problems before they happen.
- ❑ If confronted by a student, lower your voice and speak slowly, but very seriously.

All can be ordered at the NEA website, www.nea.org/books

"I walked in, introduced myself, pushed the nervousness aside, and got right to it. The butterflies went away and excitement reigned."

Melissa Balog was chair of the NEA Student Program from 1998 through 2000. Last September, she took a job teaching English at Sage Park Middle School in Windsor, Connecticut.

September

I slept about two hours last night. I was finally a teacher, the experience I had talked about for the past two years. I walked in, introduced myself, pushed the nervousness aside, and got right to it. The butterflies went away and excitement reigned! A veteran teacher was sent in to help me, but after five minutes, she said, "You obviously don't need my help," and left. My ego soared!

❧ ❧ ❧

We have to give Connecticut Mastery Tests, and I'm running around with a box of tissues. One kid totally shut down. He wrote on his test booklet, "I can't do this. I'm dumb."

What will happen to the kid who doesn't grasp all these concepts? Will he ever get to do a job that doesn't require him to look at someone and say, "Paper or plastic?" It breaks my heart.

October

My fourth period class is bright but chatty. It's hard to get their attention. So one day, I started teaching in Spanish. The kids were looking at each other. Finally, one got up the guts to say, "What are you saying?" I said, "You weren't understanding me in English, so I'm trying Spanish." I had their attention that period.

February

A lot of my students have parents my age. Their mothers had them when they were teenagers. I graduated from high school in 1992. Things are so different now. We have girls walking around in tight short skirts, very sexual at 13. I'm under 30 and it freaks me out. A lot of them say, "I want to find love and get married," which is great, but you have to keep your head. Today a student asked me what I thought of a certain boy. I said, "You're a lot smarter than that: Get your education, have money in the bank, and then you can choose the man, he won't choose you."

June

The best thing in teaching is seeing students really grasp what the author is trying to get across. My students are reading *The Pearl* by John Steinbeck, about a poor fisherman who finds a pearl. It's a dense read for 13-year-olds. Some of them flipped out when they found out it was supposed to take place in 1945—it was that *old*. But then one student said, "It doesn't matter—the words connect through the generations." I was floored—and so happy! ✔

"My first day and I already have a big problem. All my students want the other sixth-grade teacher!"

Eric Francis

Rosita Force didn't plan to teach. "I got my Mrs. instead of my BA," she explains. But she loved helping her daughter learn to read. So she went back, got her teaching degree, and last year started her new career at Franklin Elementary School in Omaha, Nebraska.

August

My first day and I already have a big problem. It's the other sixth-grade teacher, Ms. Fennell. All my students want her! She's great, so I can't blame them! The day began with one of my students crying because she wasn't in the other sixth-grade class. It ended with another student standing on a chair screaming.

❧ ❧ ❧

The screamer kept acting up. But today, driving to school, I saw her and her mother. We had the best meeting right on the corner! Mom totally supported me and said her daughter would be better from then on. I felt like I had a new life!

October

I had no idea how to teach classification in science. So I called the school district's director of science, Mary Solberg. I said I was new and lost, and would she please come help me. We hit it off, and she's giving me lots of help.

❧ ❧ ❧

I feel like the village idiot. I can count on making some stupid mistake daily.

At the same time, I feel I can relate to my kids. I grew up in a single-parent home. I was a bad kid. I stuttered and at odd moments I would walk around the classroom. So I don't expect them to sit still. I told them it's not okay to distract someone else from learning, but it's okay to walk around. One time, the principal said, "You must have been a brat. You know what to say." I still can't sit still, that's why I'm a teacher.

❧ ❧ ❧

Thursday was my first parent-teacher conference. I told Daniel's mother he wasn't getting his homework done. She works two jobs and is not home to check on him. I said I would be willing to pick him up at 7:15 a.m. on my way to school. So now Daniel comes to school with me and gets his work done. I am glad for this time to connect with him.

November

I am surprised at how much I am beginning to care about each student. Ms. Fennell told me, "The first six weeks are the hardest because you haven't fallen in love with your kids yet." When she said it, I thought, I don't know if I am capable of "falling in love" with my students, but maybe I am.

December

One of my students is writing a letter in school to her Dad, who was shot and killed earlier in the year. This is her first Christmas without him. I hope she can find some peace by writing down her feelings.

Daniel is doing well on his homework, but he got suspended for fighting. His body has a will of its own. He doesn't seem to realize what he has done until he is getting in trouble for it.

I can't wait for Christmas. I don't think I have ever been so exhausted.

February

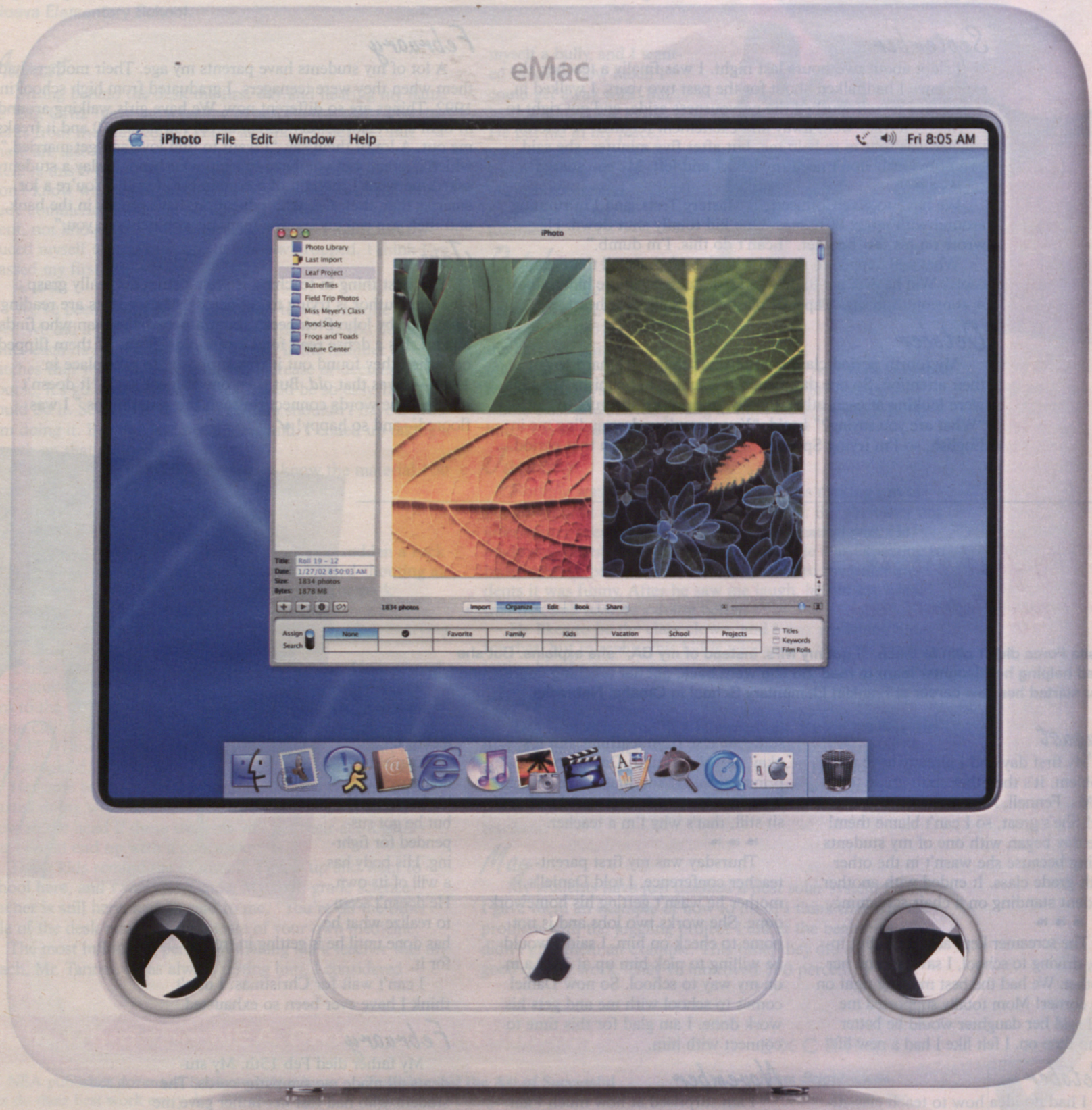
My father died Feb 15th. My students all made me sympathy cards. The student who had lost her father gave me a big hug—my eyes filled up with tears.

March

Daniel was one of the winners of the Science Writing Contest! When he heard his name announced, he jumped up and down. I was excited, too!

May

Tonight was graduation. Daniel said, "Thanks for being so mean to me, Mrs. Force—you made me a better student." Then he gave me a quick hug and went home. ✔



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Textbook Democracy, NEA-Style

Representative Assembly delegates elect new NEA leaders and tackle issues that touch your profession and your pocketbook.

Photos by Matt Ferguson and Stuart Thurkill

I am amazed by your stamina and passion for a cause," National PTA President Shirley Igo told nearly 9,000 NEA Representative Assembly delegates gathered in Dallas in early July. "You come in early and you stay late. You must be teachers!"

These were teachers *and* education support professionals, higher education members, and NEA Retired and Student members. They were all elected by colleagues back home to select new national officers, set NEA policy, and approve action items and a two-year NEA strategic plan and budget.

This was truly textbook democracy, complete with secret-ballot elections and term limits, as outgoing NEA President Bob Chase stepped down after two consecutive three-year terms.

Delegates elected Reg Weaver, an Illinois middle school science teacher, as NEA's new president. Weaver has served as NEA vice president for the past six years.

In addition, the RA selected Arizona high school math teacher Dennis Van Roekel, NEA secretary-treasurer for the past five years, as the new Association vice president. And delegates elected Utah elementary teacher Lily Eskelsen, an NEA Executive Committee member, as secretary-treasurer for one year, the time remaining in Van Roekel's term.

In other voting, delegates gave three-year terms on the NEA Executive Committee to Mike Billirakis of Ohio and Marsha Smith of Maryland.

The RA also approved Association policies on issues ranging from distance learning to federal legislative priorities, and approved a biennial budget of $266 million in the first year and $275 million in the second year.

And the Annual Meeting offered visiting reporters an update on where NEA stands on issues such as:

■ **Vouchers.** Just before the 2002 RA, a bitterly divided U.S. Supreme Court ruled by 5-4 that Cleveland's tuition voucher program does not amount to official sponsorship of religion, which is prohibited by the First Amendment of the Constitution.

The court "can say that vouchers are constitutional—just as the Court said for 60 years that segregated schools were constitutional—but that does not make it right," Bob Chase told delegates. The truth is, he said, that high-quality private schools are highly selective and have long waiting lists, and that "for-profit schools that sprout up to chase voucher money have an appalling track record of incompetence, corruption, and outright abuse."

Chase and NEA General Counsel Bob Chanin pledged that NEA will continue to challenge voucher programs in the courts of states that have rigorous church-state separation clauses in their state constitutions (For more, see Rights Watch, page 20).

■ **The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).** RA delegates voted to allocate some $4 million to expand NEA member awareness of this federal law, help shape its implementation, and advocate for needed ESEA funding and improvements.

The law, reauthorized and expanded last winter, calls for stringent student testing provisions, sanctions for schools that fail to display "adequate yearly progress," and strong quality provisions for teachers and Title I paraeducators.

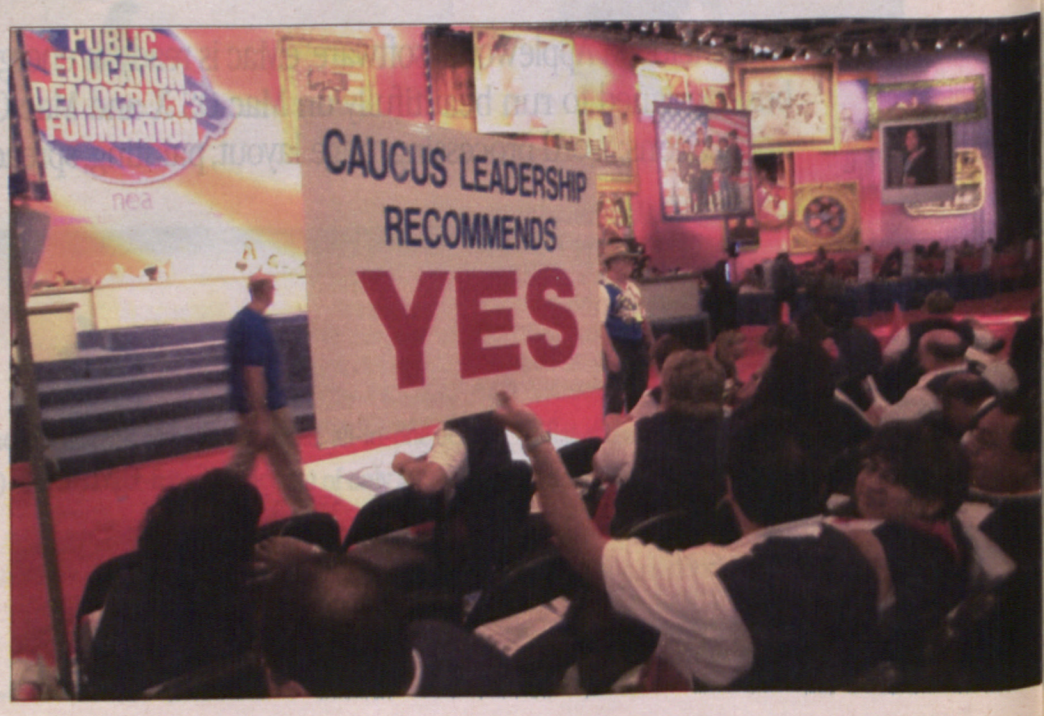
NEA Executive Committee member Becky Pringle stressed that ESEA "is good in that it spotlights education," but warned that it "sets up" resource-starved struggling schools for failure.

"We need to maximize the good, minimize the bad, and eliminate the ugly" in the new law, Pringle declared. She said that NEA will help state and local affiliates contend with ESEA provisions, while assisting members in "navigating this confusing law."

■ **Health care costs.** The RA reaffirmed support for a current joint program of NEA and the American

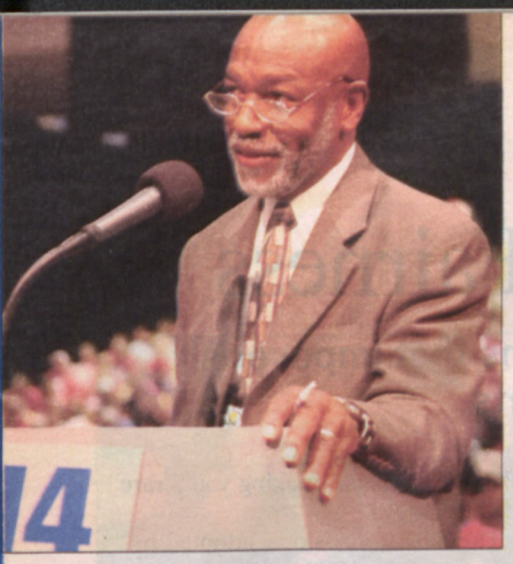
"We will experience enormous success if we collaborate with others who are in support of public education. We can't do it alone."

—Newly elected NEA President Reg Weaver



Above: Louisiana delegate Sheryl Abshire debates issues from the convention center floor.

Right: Delegates vote on everything from action items to NEA's legislative priorities.



California delegate David O'Neil (left) and first-time Connecticut delegate Elizabeth Sappington (below) were two of nearly 9,000 delegates participating in the Representative Assembly.

Federation of Teachers to "promote affordable high-quality health care for members and their families."

"Health care is becoming more unaffordable with each passing year, impacting the bargaining process with increased premiums and copays and lower levels of coverage," said Massachusetts delegate Richard Shea.

■ **Social Security offsets.** RA delegates also voted to step up NEA's campaign for repeal of the Government Pension Offset and Windfall Elimination Provision, which reduce Social Security spousal, survivor, and earned retirement benefits of educators in 15 states where public employees do not pay into Social Security.

The RA passed new business items calling for the creation of a GPO/WEP training/action cadre in each state and for coalition work with other public service unions to repeal these provisions.

■ **A voice in curricula.** The RA reaffirmed NEA's opposition to "school-wide curricular programs in which the local teachers' association is not consulted and the faculty of the affected school(s) does not vote." A new business item requires NEA to identify locally negotiated contract language that helps prevent district adoption of highly scripted programs that "discourage the exercise of informed professional teacher judgment."

"When I started teaching, every day was a challenge that motivated me to reach the depths of creativity," said California delegate John Cromshow. But today, he said, too many teachers do simply as they are told, "working on a page of a teachers' manual written by someone who has not set foot in the classroom in recent memory and works far removed from any student."

■ **Quality educators, quality schools.** Delegates passed quality-related new business items requiring NEA to initiate a program to encourage recruitment and retention of new teachers; develop "living wage" strategies for the retention of education support professionals; gather data about the employment status and working conditions of substitute teachers; and investigate "innovative efforts to recruit, train, and retain" quality subs.

An underlying message: In public education, quality is *everybody's* business. "We must work as teams to improve the education of our students," emphasized 2002 NEA ESP of the Year JoAnn Falk, a central office secretary and local leader in Pueblo, Colorado (For more, see People on page 41).

Another RA message: Quality education is for *everybody's* kids.

"We must work within an environment that recognizes that we are one in the fight for a quality public education for all students, not just some," said Reg Weaver in his first speech as president-elect. "We will experience enormous success if we collaborate with others who are in support of public education. We can't do it alone." ✔

[PRESS CLIPS]

"Stop for a moment and take a look inside the minds of America's teachers—the people who spend more time with your kids than you do. More than 9,000 of them arrived in Dallas this week as elected delegates to the National Education Association, the nation's largest teacher union.

"Collectively, they fear that the growing voucher movement might make public schools poor. They worry that emphasis on standardized test scores robs the classroom of creativity.

"Individually, they love to talk about why they chose to teach and what motivates them to get out of bed each morning and face the parents and principals who demand so much of them.

"'It's not the money; it's my soul,' said Gail Washburn, a veteran art teacher from Louisville, Kentucky . . ."

—*"Teachers Say Rewards Make Tough Job Worth the Trouble,"* Dallas Morning News, *July 4, 2002*

Oklahomans Win Health Care

Working with the broad-based Oklahoma Education Coalition, Oklahoma Education Association (OEA) members have won legislation that finally provides fully paid individual health insurance for public education employees. Until this summer, educators received just $69 monthly from the state—and in some cases a little extra from school districts—toward their $227 monthly premium.

The new law, signed by Governor Frank Keating in May, raised state and district coverage to 75 percent of a teacher's individual premium on July 1, and will boost it to 100 percent on July 1, 2003. Education support professionals received 100 percent individual coverage as of July 1.

As the 2002 legislative session convened, Oklahoma's state budget deficit was the worst in 15 years and state agencies were bracing for double-digit budget cutbacks. Yet only four state lawmakers voted against the health care bill.

Small wonder. OEA's action plan included a sustained, escalating public relations campaign; intensive political organizing; and a series of town hall meetings, sponsored by the Oklahoma Education Coalition, uniting 12 highly respected education organizations.

Scores of reporters covered the town hall sessions, resulting in positive coverage from "border to border." More than 7,000 educators and supporters flocked to the meetings to show support and voice opinions.

Later, a successful Lobby Day attracted roughly 3,000 education employees from across the state. This group was present when the state House unanimously passed the initial version of the health care legislation.

"This victory proves that OEA members who become politically active can make a big difference," says OEA President Carolyn Crowder. "They have advanced the teaching profession for themselves and for their fellow members." ✔

[YOUR DUES DID IT]

NEAFT September 11 Fund Report

Last autumn, NEA and the American Federation of Teachers created the NEAFT September 11 Fund to assist children and other affected family members of the victims of the September 11 terrorist attacks and their aftermath. Money was then raised from NEA and AFT appropriations, state and local affiliates, and the generous donations of individual union members.

By mid-2002, the fund's expenditures were winding down. As of June 11, the fund had disbursed $765,000 to 227 individuals and their families for basic expenses such as travel to funerals, grief counseling, financial planning, rent or mortgage assistance, health care, and higher education expenses.

Expenditures, for the most part, were divided equally among all recipients, with an initial check of $1,000 and a second payment of $1,825—for a total of $2,825. In addition, families of four union members who perished on two of the crashed airliners received another $2,500 in death benefits, making their total $5,325.

Other fund payments included $21,000 sent directly to replace photocopiers in blast-damaged New York City schools.

"All across America teachers and education support professionals did everything they could to shepherd our children and young people through this tragedy," said outgoing NEA President Bob Chase. "And the NEAFT September 11 Fund provided us with a unique opportunity to do something equally special for the children and the affected families of the victims."

Quite Simply, an Issue of Fairness

NEA steps up drive to repeal Social Security provisions that impoverish retired educators and hinder teacher recruitment efforts.

Photos by Greg E. Mathieson/MAI

On Capitol Hill, Missouri NEA Vice President Chris Guinther, far right, lobbies Representative William Clay (D-Mo.) on the pitfalls of the Government Pension Offset and the Windfall Elimination Provision. Behind Clay are, from left, NEA Directors Lola Bolden (Tenn.), Charles Smith (Mo.), and Jane Ligon (ESP At-Large–Tenn.).

You might think that two little-known sections of the federal Social Security Act, the Government Pension Offset (GPO) and the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP), couldn't have anything to do with classroom quality or the living standards of teachers and education support professionals.

If that's your first reaction, you probably work outside one of the 15 states where the GPO and WEP are impoverishing retired educators and making it increasingly harder to entice new teachers from the private sector, especially in math, science, and vocational fields.

Or you're probably a member of Congress who hasn't been visited by an NEA member/lobbyist seeking total GPO/WEP repeal—making you a rare creature indeed.

These two provisions, adopted by Congress in the 1980s as a snap solution to problems such as pension "double dipping" abuses and budget deficits, have inflicted damage lawmakers never intended.

In 15 states where educators and other public and federal employees don't pay into Social Security, the Government Pension Offset reduces a worker's Social Security spousal or survivor benefit by an amount equal to two-thirds of his or her public pension.

Duck that one, and you're slammed by the Windfall Elimination Provision, which reduces the earned Social Security benefits of an individual who also receives a public pension from a job not covered by Social Security.

Complex to explain, but easy to grasp when you gauge the emotional and monetary damage these provisions inflict. In affected states like California, Illinois, Texas, and Massachusetts, many teachers and ESPs receive rosy Social Security statements advising them they've earned sufficient credits for a full retirement benefit, but then go into shock when the first, reduced Social Security check arrives.

Word travels about this breach of

"Before we lobbied them, members of Congress did not realize the magnitude of this problem. It was an education for some, and all could see that this is a *fairness* issue."

—NEA-Retired President Jim Sproul

Elementary teacher Dana Dillon: "It's important that members of Congress understand that this is a national issue."

GPO/WEP Lobbying: Some Tips

Total repeal of the Government Pension Offset and the Windfall Elimination Provision is possible, but only if members of Congress hear from NEA members across the country.

"You don't need to travel to Washington, D.C., to call for repeal of the GPO and WEP," says NEA lobbyist Steve Nousen. "All members of Congress have offices in their home districts, and they're at home every weekend. Just call and schedule a meeting."

Don't doubt your lobbying credentials for a minute. Observes Nousen: "NEA members speak from classroom experience, they talk intelligently and to the point, and they know how to deal with people and advocate for their position."

How do you approach this task? Here are some clues from California and Louisiana educators who lobbied lawmakers on May 1:

- **Stick to talking points and tell real-life stories.** California elementary teachers Dana Dillon and Eugene Fernandes, both members of the NEA Board of Directors, told House members and staff that the GPO and WEP discriminate against teachers, force retired educators into poverty, and hurt teacher recruitment efforts.

From left to right: Georgia Association of Educators President Ralph Noble—with NEA Board of Directors representatives, Meg Gruber (Va.) and Karen McBryde (S.C.)—lists problems created by the GPO and WEP to Senator Max Cleland (D-Ga.).

trust and financial loss, which especially impacts low-income women. Veteran educators delay retirement plans and second-career educators decide to return to the private sector to save their hard-earned Social Security benefits.

In the first week of May, members of Congress heard all this and more straight from active and retired NEA members—through phone calls, postcards, more than 7,000 e-mail messages, and visits to Capitol Hill by some 150 NEA state leaders, organized into 46 lobbying teams.

NEA's goal: Win cosponsors for legislation to totally repeal the GPO and WEP, sponsored in the House by Representatives Howard Berman (D-Calif.) and Howard "Buck" McKeon (R-Calif.) and in the Senate by Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.).

Representatives Berman and McKeon, co-authors of H.R. 2638, the Social Security Fairness Act, fired up NEA lobbyists before their Hill visits.

Berman cited the Los Angeles Unified School District's "desperate need for new teachers" and stressed that the continued existence of the GPO and WEP sends a message to "people in other careers interested in teaching that 'you come at your own jeopardy and will pay down the road.' It's a big deterrent."

"We should do what we can to encourage teaching," added McKeon, who gave the lobbyists a "please cosponsor" letter to hand to House Republicans. "With as many problems as we are having getting new teachers, we should reach out to the private sector to expand your ranks. Don't be discouraged. We'll make this happen!"

During the first week of May alone, NEA's grassroots GPO/WEP repeal campaign—which has involved grassroots lobbying, media outreach, and regional training sessions for local leaders and activists—enlisted 16 new bill cosponsors in the House and two in the Senate. At press time, the total number of cosponsors had reached 163 in the House and 10 in the Senate.

"Members of Congress and their staff were very open to what we had to say to them," reported NEA-Retired President Jim Sproul after a day on Capitol Hill. "They did not realize the magnitude of this problem. It was an education for some, and all could see that this is a fairness issue."

The GPO and WEP affect all public employees in Alaska, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Illinois, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Missouri, Nevada, Ohio, and Texas, and employees of certain local governments in Georgia, Kentucky, and Rhode Island. ✔

—Dave Winans

For more on the GPO and WEP and on legislation to repeal them, go to www.nea.org/lac/socsec. There you'll also find talking points on repeal and an e-mail link to your members of Congress.

"At my school, Parkdale Lane in Encinitas, two second-career student teachers—one out of the Marine Corps, the other out of the business world—are fully vested in Social Security," notes Fernandes, a fourth-grade teacher. "They have said they will no longer teach in a public school if the GPO and WEP are not repealed. We are going to lose excellent teachers who are creative with children."

• Make it personal. "I've worked 26 years in education and I'm ready to retire," points out NEA Executive Committee member Iona Holloway, a paraeducator at East St. John High School in Reserve, Louisiana. "But I'm not going to get any money because of the pension offset. I'll stay at work as long as I can."

• Make it a national issue. In this highly mobile society, the GPO and WEP affect school employees everywhere, especially those who cross state lines to work in populous states like California and Texas.

"It's important that members of Congress understand that this is a *national* issue," stresses Dana Dillon, a sixth-grade language arts teacher and K-12 librarian at California's Weed Elementary School. ✔

Federal Law Update

NEA Testifies On Testing Rules. . . Last spring, NEA members testified at five regional Department of Education hearings on proposed Title I testing and accountability draft regulations under the newly reauthorized Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). NEA's message:

- There must be adequate federal resources to implement this new law and help all kids succeed. Moreover, the Department of Education must find ways to ensure that school districts provide opportunities for teacher and paraeducator professional development to meet high ESEA standards.
- The input of NEA members is necessary to create a successful assessment and accountability system. They must be involved *throughout* the process.
- Tests need to be more than high-profile and high-stakes. A single test score does not tell the whole story of student success.

Teacher "Protection" In Question. . . One new section of ESEA is the Paul D. Coverdell Teacher Protection Act of 2001 (TPA), designed to protect school employees from lawsuits filed by students and parents arising out of efforts to discipline students or maintain school order.

The law comes with two problems: Its scope of protection has been overstated, and Association opponents may try to use the TPA to pursuade school employees to abandon NEA and its effective Educators Employment Liability Program.

For answers to questions you'll hear about the Teacher Protection Act, go to www.nea.org/issues/esea/02protectionact.html. ✔

[KUDOS TO...]

. . . the **Maryland State Teachers Association,** for winning big changes in the state's bargaining law. ESP on Maryland's Eastern Shore now have the right to bargain a contract and teachers now can negotiate items beyond wages and working conditions—including school quality issues—once a local Association and school board agree on the topic to be brought to the table.

. . . the **Colorado Education Association,** which defeated three private school tax credit bills and stopped a last-minute attempt to resurrect a tuition scholarship bill with enormous income tax credits for contributors.

. . . the **Utah Education Association,** which has defeated a bill that would have allowed school districts to enter into separate contracts with individual employees—despite negotiated collective agreements. The bill also would have taken away the discretion and autonomy of districts to develop termination procedures in concert with employees.

. . . the **Alabama Education Association,** which, in the face of a budget deficit, has won a 3 percent cost of living adjustment—effective October 1—for all public K-12 teachers, support professionals, and retirees.

. . . the **West Virginia Education Association,** for winning passage of legislation requiring heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems in new schools to be tested by independent engineers prior to opening day. The new law also requires that school HVAC maintenance employees be properly trained and that all indoor air quality problems be reported to both the state Department of Education and the School Building Authority.

School Funding Adequacy—What It Costs To Do the Job Right

'Adequacy' defined: After you crank out educational standards, you cost out what it takes to implement them. It's really that simple.

If you ran a company, would you build a state-of-the-art production facility by obsessing over blueprints and directives to your contractors—without ever inquiring about their choice of materials and skilled labor, or wondering if the completed building had the capacity to produce quality products?

That's the course many state legislators follow for public education, drafting tough standards without inquiring what it *really* costs for teachers and education support professionals to implement them. Instead, lawmakers haggle over what they can afford and work backward from there.

There is a far smarter method for allocating resources needed to meet standards for student achievement and school accountability, something education finance experts call "adequacy."

In this process, the components of an adequate, quality education—required by statute, standards, or court decisions—are costed out and funded by the state on an ongoing basis, with adjustments for inflation, enrollment increases, and changing student needs.

Don't dismiss this as funding fantasy. At the start of this school year, NEA members in at least two states, Maryland and Wyoming, are well down the road to funding adequacy, thanks to coalition work and the long shadow of past school finance lawsuits.

Since the late 1980s, state high courts across the nation have increasingly ruled in school funding cases that existing funding methods violate state constitutional mandates for a "thorough and efficient," "adequate," or "ample" system of public education.

After looking at the law and the ever-tougher standards, courts have tended to rule that existing funding can't help prepare all students to compete in today's competitive marketplace or become citizens capable of, say, serving on juries in complex cases.

"And time and again," notes Ohio Education Association school finance expert Russ Harris, "courts have ruled that education is a *state* responsibility and that there is just one *state* school system. The state has a constitutional responsibility to design a fair and adequate system, and while it can delegate authority to school districts, it can't delegate that responsibility."

And the state's other responsibility, the courts inevitably conclude, is to cost out and fund the components of an equitable and adequate public education system.

That's just common sense. And that, in effect, is *accountability*—something that ought to apply to governors and legislators as much as it does to teachers and ESP. ✔

—D.W.

Amy Ning

NEA Affiliates Pursue Different Paths to Adequacy

In reports from the field, the word 'coalition' keeps cropping up.

School funding "adequacy" can become a reality through research into the true costs of a quality education, coalition work, willingness to dig in for the long haul, and—yes—willingness to file lawsuits when legislators drag their heels.

That's the quick and dirty from NEA state affiliates on the front line of the battle for funding reform. Here's a progress report from several states:

- **Maryland: Sanity Without Lawsuits...** Miracle of miracles: In this election year, in the face of an $800 million budget deficit, Maryland's legislature and governor fully endorsed recommendations of the state Thornton Commission, appointed in 1999 to develop a school finance structure based on adequacy.

The bottom line: Public schools across the state will receive $1.3 billion in additional funding by 2008, on top of $884 million in already-scheduled increases. By the 2007-08 school year, school systems must provide full-day kindergarten for all students and must make pre-kindergarten programs available for all economically disadvantaged four-year-olds.

The state's per-pupil "foundation" amount will increase from $4,124 to $5,443 (excluding the costs of employee retirement and four federal general ed programs) through a six-year phase-in period that begins in fiscal year 2003—and will keep tracking inflation.

Moreover, higher "factors" will be added into a student's foundation amount if he or she has special needs, is economically disadvantaged, or has limited English language skills.

For the first two years, this package will be funded by a tobacco tax hike.

The Thornton Commission, which included Betsy Moyer, executive director of the Maryland State Teachers Association, costed out the price of classroom quality through two nationally accepted methods—"professional judgment" panels of teachers and other education stakeholders that modeled "prototype" schools to meet state standards, and a "successful schools" analysis of the actual costs paid by 59

high-achieving Maryland schools.

This new funding, coupled with MSTA-backed legislation that expands educator bargaining rights, "gives us the ability to bring quality issues beyond the usual bread-and-butter stuff to the bargaining table," enthuses MSTA President Pat Foerster.

■ **Wyoming: A Big Bump In Educator Pay...** It's taken three successive state Supreme Court decisions to move Wyoming legislators off the dime, and the court has made it clear this case isn't closed yet. But thanks to continuous pressure from the Wyoming Education Coalition, the legislature must now—in compliance with a 2001 court ruling—adjust spending every two years for inflation; make all school facilities "safe and efficient" by July 1, 2008; and review all components of its "cost-based" funding model every five years to ensure it does reflect costs.

The Wyoming Supreme Court also called for an adjustment of teacher, ESP, and administrator salaries to "account for differences in experience, responsibility, and authority." Accordingly, Wyoming teachers received an average 9.12 percent pay increase between school years 2000-01 and 2001-02, boosting them from 42nd to 35th in NEA's 2001-02 teacher rankings.

"The coalition the Wyoming Education Association helped create is the reason we've been successful," stresses WEA staffer Ron Sniffin. "In the last legislative session, we added school business officials to our ranks. They've been very effective advocates."

■ **Ohio: In For The Long Haul...** Since 1991, when the Ohio Coalition for Equity & Adequacy in School Funding—formed with help from NEA's state affiliate—first filed suit over the constitutionality of school spending, the state Supreme Court has been forced to rule three times on the issue.

In its most recent decision, in 2001, the court determined that the state had manipulated three costing-out studies to lower the per-pupil support level, now creeping in steps up to $4,061.

"Ohio still doesn't have a per-pupil foundation level that has any substantial relationship to the actual cost of delivering educational services," fumes E&A Coalition Executive Director William L. Phillis. "The state doesn't have a clue to the funding needed."

But through the haze, the State of Ohio does perceive the bright light of unity. The E&A Coalition includes more than 550 of Ohio's 611 school districts, and serving on its steering committee is Ohio Education Association President Gary Allen.

"The state knows these plaintiff districts will not disappear," stresses OEA staffer Russ Harris. "Because of their litigation, the state has invested $3 billion in new school facilities since 1997, and $675 million in equity funds in low-wealth districts—and we've won some good new case law. Moreover, the state has admitted that its funding system is inadequate, inequitable, and morally wrong."

■ **Montana and Indiana: Making Politicians Accountable...** Over the past decade, the Montana state government's share of K-12 public school fund costs has fallen from 71.4 percent to 61.3 percent. The result: program cuts, average teacher salaries that rank 48th in the nation, and an exodus of university education program graduates.

NEA's Montana affiliate, MEA-MFT, has responded by spearheading two statewide pro-education coalitions, one of which is now conducting a costing-out study to prepare for a possible finance adequacy lawsuit. The other coalition, Stand Up For Education (SUFE), is taking the case for improved education funding directly to the public.

Last spring, SUFE conducted 10 highly visible public forums across Montana, in which taxpayers, reporters, and even legislators heard shocking firsthand accounts of the crisis in K-12 and higher education funding, many delivered by MEA-MFT members.

"People who attended the hearings get it; the press gets it," says MEA-MFT staffer Sanna Porte. "The problems are worse than they thought. There's simply not enough state funding to keep our public schools and colleges strong."

"This fall," Porte adds, "MEA-MFT is conducting a nonpartisan media campaign urging voters to pose specific questions to candidates concerning their support for public education."

And back in the Hoosier State, the Indiana State Teachers Association plans to pin down political hopefuls on their level of support for resources needed to effectively implement an accountability law and standards passed in the last legislative session by a unanimous vote.

"In the 2003 session, we hope to get funding for planning and pilot programs that address the achievement gap and help children who are not meeting our new standards," says ISTA Deputy Executive Director Dan Clark.

Leaving nothing to chance, ISTA is conducting its own "professional judgment" cost analysis to back its arguments and is planning to join a new Statewide Achievement Gap Coalition.

"Coalition work is essential," says Clark. "In Indiana, we work in an environment where 70 to 80 percent of adults don't have children in public school. If we don't make connections to the business community and other advocates for children, we can't reach the level of financial support we need." ✔

—Dave Winans

Adequacy: Just One Piece Of a Bigger Puzzle

The very idea of education funding adequacy may seem irrelevant to you if your state is facing a steep budget deficit. But consider these points from NEA Research staffer Michael Kahn, who works on education finance and economic issues:

■ **Courts may issue great school funding adequacy decisions, but they can't write tax laws.** Many states have built-in budget deficits because of archaic, piecemeal tax systems that have become more reliant on user fees or gambling revenue. These structures often shift much of the tax burden from corporations to average homeowners and the poor and don't capture growth in booming areas such as the service sector and Internet commerce.

■ **There can be a saner tax system.** It must be stable, balanced, elastic, and based on an economic development policy that doesn't trade off adequate education funding for new business investment—the two work together.

■ **Quality education demands a balance of factors.** The list includes funding equity and adequacy, a balanced tax system, pay for quality teachers (which in real terms hasn't changed in 30 years), proper funding for facilities and technology, and alignment of federal, state, and local fiscal responsibilities.

■ **Accountability comes with a price tag.** The current standards and accountability movement affords NEA members a golden opportunity to link accountability to funding adequacy. The public understands that one can't be held fully accountable unless he or she is given sufficient resources to do the job.

"If we don't make connections to the business community and other advocates for children, we can't reach the level of financial support we need."

—Dan Clark, Deputy Executive Director
Indiana State Teachers Association

Supreme Court Says Yes to Vouchers, Drug Testing

Despite a legal setback, NEA's voucher battle will continue. On another front, the Supreme Court upholds student drug testing and nixes privacy lawsuits.

Elizabeth Lada

It came down to a single vote. In a 5-4 decision, the Supreme Court in June upheld private school vouchers, rejecting NEA's argument that such schemes violate the First Amendment's Establishment Clause.

Addressing the NEA Representative Assembly on July 2, outgoing NEA President Bob Chase vowed that the battle over vouchers is just beginning.

"To the voucher ideologues, we make this promise: We will expose your false promises. We will lay bare your lies," Chase said. "And as we have done in California, Michigan, and everywhere else that vouchers have been on the ballot, we will defeat you!"

NEA General Counsel Bob Chanin, who argued the case before the Supreme Court, declared, "This does not end the legal battle," in part because voucher programs can still be challenged in state court. According to the Congressional Research Service, 38 states have clauses in their constitutions prohibiting the use of public money to aid religious schools.

In fact, NEA is sponsoring a state court challenge to Florida's statewide voucher program on the ground that it violates the religion clause of the Florida constitution, which provides that "no revenue of the state" can be used "directly or indirectly in aid of…any sectarian institution."

And, under a continuing new business item, NEA is committed to initiate a court challenge to any voucher plan enacted into law.

In an all-too-familiar pattern, the Supreme Court justices in the Cleveland voucher case, *Zelman v. Simmons-Harris*, were sharply divided along ideological lines. Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist wrote the majority opinion for the conservative bloc, including Justices Antonin Scalia, Clarence Thomas, Anthony M. Kennedy, and Sandra Day O'Connor.

The majority reasoned that the voucher program is permissible because it does not provide direct government aid to religious institutions. Rather, the money flows through parents and thus "reaches religious schools only as a result of the genuine and independent choices of private individuals."

Writing for the four dissenters, Justice David Souter warned that using taxpayer funds to pay for religious indoctrination will increase tensions among religions.

He also suggested that this decision could be overturned by a subsequent Supreme Court, writing, "I hope that a future court will reconsider today's dramatic departure from basic establishment clause principle."

In another June decision, the Supreme Court ruled that school districts can require students to submit to random drug tests in order to participate in extracurricular activities.

In this case, students covered by a drug testing policy included members of the Future Farmers of America, Future Homemakers of America, Academic Team, band, and choir. The court reasoned that the school's interest in deterring drug use outweighed students' rights to be free of suspicionless drug testing under the Fourth Amendment.

In addition, the court ruled that students do not have the right to sue school districts, colleges and universities, or school employees for violating their rights under the federal privacy law, known as FERPA.

That statute prohibits educational institutions from disclosing a student's "educational records" to a third party without the student's permission.

The court held that Congress intended that the only remedy for a FERPA violation should be the cutoff of federal funds, and not lawsuits for damages by individual plaintiffs. ✔

—Michael D. Simpson
NEA Office of General Counsel

Federal Appeals Court Bans Pledge of Allegiance in Schools

In a decision that stunned the nation, a federal appeals court in June ruled that reciting the Pledge of Allegiance in public schools is unconstitutional because the pledge contains the words "under God."

In a 2-1 ruling, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit said that the phrase violates the First Amendment's prohibition on the establishment of religion.

Said the court: "A profession that we are a nation 'under God' is identical, for Establishment Clause purposes, to a profession that we are a nation 'under Jesus,' a nation 'under Vishnu,' a nation 'under Zeus,' or a nation 'under no god,' because none of these professions can be neutral with respect to religion."

The court added, "The coercive effect of this policy is particularly pronounced in the school setting, given the age and impressionability of schoolchildren."

If allowed to stand, the court's ruling would ban classroom recitations of the pledge in Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington.

To date, however, the decision has had minimal impact; the court postponed the ruling from taking effect pending appeal.

Atheist Michael Newdow—who has a law degree and is representing himself—filed the lawsuit because he didn't want his second-grade daughter to be pressured into saying the pledge at her Sacramento, California, school.

Newdow's lawsuit challenges Congress' decision in 1954 to add the words "under God" to the pledge, which originally contained no religious references.

The Ninth Circuit concluded that the sole purpose of the 1954 law was to "advance religion" as a means of differentiating the United States from the "communist" Soviet Union.

This decision conflicts with a 1992 Seventh Circuit decision upholding classroom recitations of the pledge, finding that the pledge's reference to God was mere "ceremonial deism," akin to the motto on coins "In God we trust."

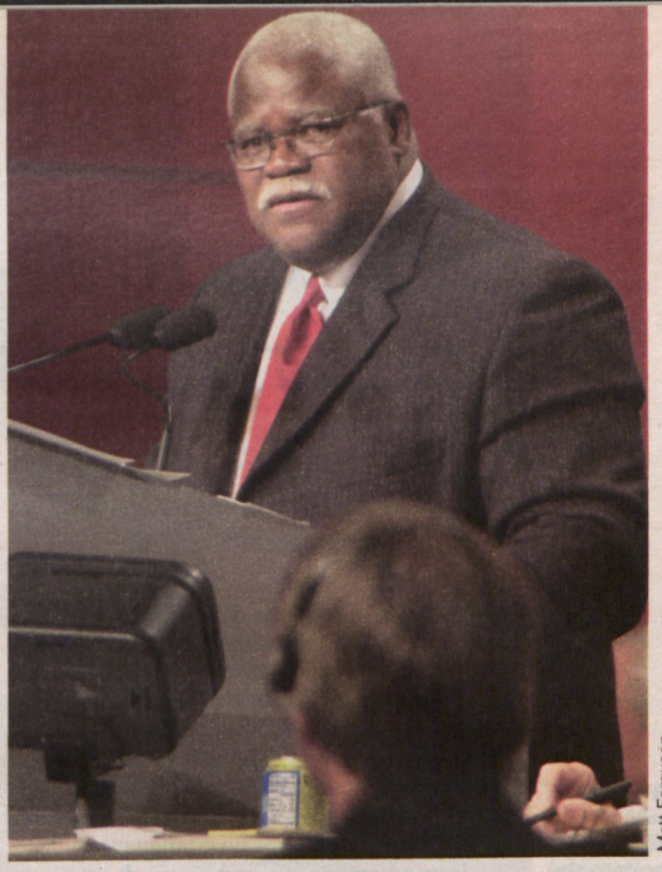
The case, *Newdow v. U.S. Congress*, will be appealed to the full Ninth Circuit or the U.S. Supreme Court. Most legal experts anticipate that the ruling will be overturned.

At the 2002 Representative Assembly, the NEA Board of Directors voted to support the current version of the Pledge of Allegiance. ✔

—Cynthia M. Chmielewski
NEA Office of General Counsel

Meet Reg Weaver

NEA's new president hones in on safe schools, true education reform, and parental involvement in schools.



Matt Ferguson

Reg Weaver, a science teacher from Illinois, was elected president of the NEA at the 2002 Representative Assembly in Dallas this past July. Weaver grew up in Danville, Illinois, where he attended a segregated school for part of his elementary school years. He went on to become a local leader and then president of the Illinois Education Association from 1981 to 1987. He led a recruitment drive that boosted IEA membership nearly 50 percent and a political campaign that led to the passage in 1983 of a mandatory and comprehensive collective bargaining law—Weaver keeps a photo of the bill signing in his office. For the past six years, Weaver has served as NEA vice president. He spoke recently to NEA Today*'s Marilyn Milloy and Alain Jehlen about the course he's charting as head of the nation's largest education organization.*

Who are the teachers you remember best?

My high school homeroom teacher, Mr. Sanders, tried to get me to take chemistry. But I said, oh, no. Not the kid. That's too hard. A history teacher, Ms. Watkins, wanted me to come out for the speaking club. But I thought that wasn't for me. Black kids don't do that—that's acting white. My peers would have jumped all over me. So I said, no, the kid's not going to do that.

So what happens? I get to college, take lots of science courses, eventually teach science, and today a lot of what I do is public speaking.

What led you to teaching?

When I started college, I wanted to be a Spanish interpreter. Spanish was a good subject for me in high school. But I also wrestled, and I accepted a wrestling scholarship to Illinois State Normal University, not knowing it was a teachers' college.

I went there thinking that I was going to be an interpreter or else a physical therapist. Then I found out it was a teachers' college and I couldn't major in Spanish or physical therapy. So, I said, OK, let me get the next closest thing, so I majored in special education for the physically handicapped.

My first job interview was for special education. And I did not get the job, not because of race, but because of sex discrimination: They didn't want males working with smaller children. My first job was teaching fifth grade. I made $5,000 a year, a whole bunch of money.

What is your goal for the NEA?

I want to take the message out there to the people that NEA is everywhere. We are on every corner. We are in every community. I want to sit in the barber shops, the beauty shops, the offices, the parks. I want to get on the radio. I want to say to people, "Look here, you've got grandmothers, nieces, cousins, next-door neighbors who are your children's teachers. Talk to them. And you know what? Those are the very same people the opponents of public education are trashing."

How can the NEA beat back those opponents, especially those pushing vouchers?

We have to reach out to all communities, and especially to the minority communities, because they are the target audiences for our opponents.

In many minority communities, primarily African American and Hispanic, if you ask, are you in favor of vouchers, they may say yes. They don't know that vouchers are a ticket to nowhere. All they know is that they want something for their child.

But these folks have to understand that the condition of public schools is not the fault of the teachers and support staff. It's because, in many instances, they have not been given the support they need in order to be successful.

We have to make sure they know exactly what needs to be done, what we're doing, and what we have to do together. Then, when our opponents come to them, they'll say, we don't need you. We've got the NEA.

Unfortunately, some of the parents don't feel welcome in the schools. And when they don't feel welcome in the schools, they don't think we care for their children. And, if they don't think we care for their children, they'll do whatever they can to get their kids out.

How do we make parents feel welcome?

Don't let the parents feel fearful of coming to the schools. Call them up when things are right. Think about it: When do we contact parents most? When something is wrong. What I used to do was call the parents. I'd go to their house to eat. Now, don't think that doesn't get around. The next day in school, "Man, Mr. Weaver was over at so-and-so's house."

Invite the parents to the school: "Come on up, see what we've got here. I need your help."

How can we get parents to work with us for public education?

We've got to teach the children. I don't care how you get around it, it's all going to come back to how well we work with these students. I guarantee you, if the parents perceive us teaching their children, they're not going to want anything else. Parents who are attracted to vouchers want the same thing for their child that rich folks have for theirs: quality education.

Eighty-five percent of the richest parents send their children to a public school. Why? Because, those public schools have everything they need. All I'm saying is, I want the students in the inner-cities or poor rural areas to have the same kinds of schools you'll find in an upscale suburb. That's what I want. Is it a challenge? You bet it is.

What's your strategy for meeting that challenge?

Three parts:

Number one is ensuring that all children have access to a school that is safe, free from intimidation and harassment, and has an atmosphere that is conducive to good teaching and learning.

It doesn't matter what kind of reform efforts you have—if parents feel the school is not safe, they're not going to want to send their children there. The discipline has to be improved. We have to make sure that bullying is minimized, that sexual harassment is minimized. We have to have peer mediation and other programs to work with students and modify behavior.

Number two is meaningful education reform created by those of us responsible for its success. Too many times, people want to dump things on us without ever asking us whether or not it's going to work. We get told to jump on every fad that comes about. New math, old math. School with walls, school without walls. You name it, it's there.

And number three is policies that attract and retain quality people in the teaching profession. We've got too many people leaving because they're not getting the salaries they deserve. In Nebraska, an ice cream truck driver can make more than a beginning teacher. There's something wrong with that picture, folks. And it's not acceptable any longer. We have to get that message to the parents and the politicians.

We need more minority teachers. School districts need to aggressively recruit them. We need to encourage support staff to become teachers. Also, it's important that we look at low-income students who would make good teachers but don't have the opportunity.

And then, the last thing is, end the sink or swim syndrome. You come in, and you're told, here's your assignment. Don't ask me for help. That's not right. We need mentoring programs. We need to be colleagues in terms of helping people coming in to be more successful.

That's what we have to do, my friends, and we need everybody's support. Together, we can do this. ✔

To Learn A Language

A leading scientist speaks out on what English-language learners need to succeed in school.

David Bacon

Kenji Hakuta conducts pioneering research into how people learn language.

In the contentious debate over how best to teach English-language learners, Kenji Hakuta is not a name that readily pops to mind. Yet this Stanford University professor is helping shape the national discourse—not with political rhetoric, but with his own research.

Dr. Hakuta is an experimental psycholinguist—he studies how language is learned and used—and his work on how long it takes children to become proficient in English has made him one of the most sought-after thinkers in America on the question of what works best: English immersion, bilingual programs, or something in between. His research has even landed him in lively face-offs with Ronald Unz, the California businessman who has funded anti-bilingual education propositions in several states.

It's an unlikely role for a man who firmly believes "horse race" comparisons of English-language learner programs are beside the point. While bilingual education shows slightly better success than English-only—Hakuta has analyzed the data—the real key to helping kids learn English, he insists, is to improve their schools.

"Three-quarters of English learners attend high-poverty schools, which have the highest percentage of teachers on emergency credentials, the highest student turnover, the most difficult circumstances generally," Hakuta says. "The students will suffer regardless of the program."

Unfortunately, he adds, this focus rarely finds its way into the debate over bilingual education. Claims by Unz, for example, that test scores in California soared because of the English-only mandates in Proposition 227 cloud the bigger social issues—and are misguided, to boot, Hakuta says. Scores shot up in districts that used bilingual programs, too, he notes.

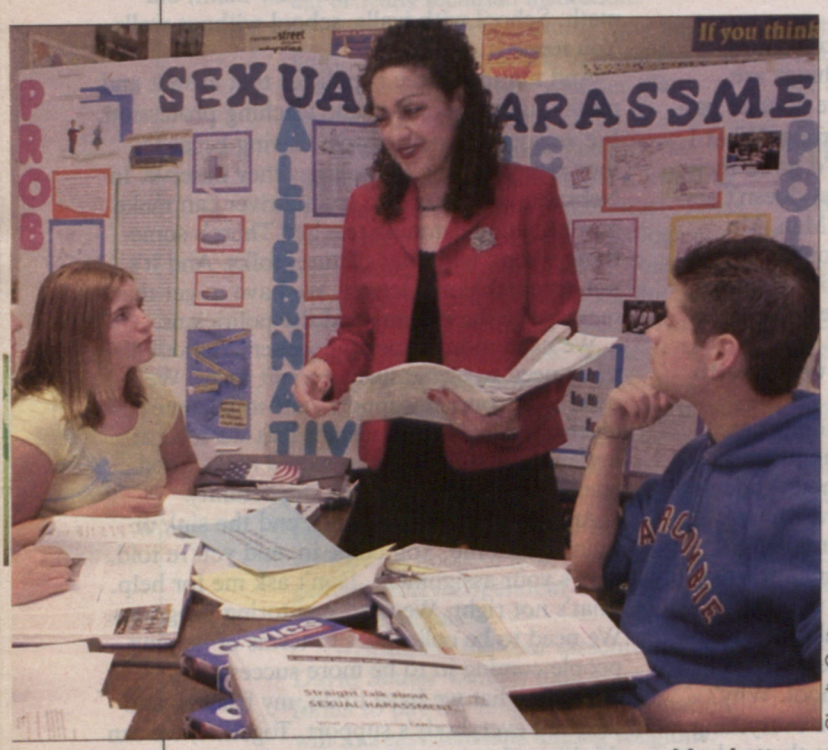
Hakuta, who also chairs a key U.S. Department of Education research policy board, studied a California school district that had the fastest rate for designating English-language learners "proficient" and found it took four to seven years to get students to that level. A host of factors, however, can slow that process or quicken it: parent education, literacy in the child's first language, and age.

Hakuta hopes that one day, the issues of equity and access for English-language learners won't loom so large, and bilingualism—which his research shows leads to higher "cognitive flexibility"—can be appreciated on its merit.

"I've documented that native Spanish speakers who haven't received much support in their own language retain their oral skills, but won't develop the academic aspect of their own language," he says. "It's a shame."

—Marilyn Milloy

For more: Visit www.stanford.edu/~hakuta/. Hakuta is featured in the National Association for Bilingual Education Star Series professional development kit. Find it under products at www.nabe.org.



Charlie Cortez

Maria Kopicki and her students came up with a better, clearer sexual harassment policy for their school.

Flirting or Hurting?

Four years ago, several boys at Avondale Middle School in Rochester Hills, Michigan, were suspended for sexual harassment. The boys thought they were just flirting.

The very next week, Maria Kopicki's eighth-grade criminal law class decided to rework the school sexual harassment policy.

That policy banned four broad categories of harassment: verbal abuse, pressure for sexual activity, persistent remarks about one's body, and physical assault.

The class expanded the list, put in specifics, and divided offenses into three levels of severity.

Deliberate staring is mildly offensive, they decided. Joking about sexual orientation is a moderate transgression. Threatening sexual behavior is severe.

The students said the difference between flirting and harassment is that harassment makes someone uncomfortable. "Ninety percent of the time, people do not think their behavior is harassment," says Kopicki.

The project won first prize in Michigan's Project Citizen competition, which is cosponsored by the National Conference of State Legislatures. Kopicki's class and their work drew national attention with a Nickelodeon feature.

The school board approved the new guidelines for the school district. Avondale Middle School reports a 90 percent drop in sexual harassment complaints since the new policy took effect.

—Lauren Fischer

For more: E-mail Maria at Maria.Kopicki@Avondale.k12.mi.us.

A Global Study Of the Moon

The Moon shining down on Alabama is the focus of a project that has linked fourth and fifth graders in Tuscaloosa's Northington Elementary School with other budding scientists around the globe.

Funded partly by a grant from The NEA Foundation for the Improvement of Education (NFIE), the effort involved the University of Alabama, Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana, and several public schools. "It was a true partnership in every way," says Alabama Professor Kathy Shaver.

The main goal was to teach students why the Moon has phases. National science standards say that's something students should know, but research shows even most adults can't explain it. Admitting that teaching science was never her passion, Northington teacher Randy Moodie says the project had teachers and students learning together.

That's just what Ball State Professor Walter Smith had in mind when he launched the project in 2001. He started small, electronically linking fourth graders, preservice teachers from his campus lab school, and Navajo students in New Mexico. The next semester, he added more schools and by last spring, had more than 300 children worldwide.

The most basic step, getting students to make nightly drawings of the Moon's appearance, proved the hardest for the Alabama children. Many lived in low-income housing units and their parents did not let them go out at night, says Moodie. "If they couldn't see the Moon from their windows, they couldn't do the log." So other classmates shared their sketches and students used newspapers and calendars to find each day's phase.

Moodie says the children loved chatting online with students from Indiana, Alaska, New Mexico, and Australia. Videoconference equipment allowed students to draw the Moon for their new buddies.

"They were amazed that students in other places saw the same phase of the Moon," Moodie says.

Students also kept journals, wrote Moon poems, sang oldies like "Bad Moon Rising," and studied Moon-related vocabulary, getting a kick out of Latin-derived words like lunacy and lunatic. Werewolves were a hot topic when students discussed Moon-based superstitions. Online conversations allowed students to share and discover Moon legends from other cultures.

For more: Go to http://web.bsu.edu/moon/ or e-mail Shaver at kshaver@bamaed.ua.edu. Go to www.nfie.org for information on NEA Foundation for the Improvement of Education grants.

Robert Sutton

Alabama teacher Randy Moodie views a lunar website for an international project. She helps children from Tuscaloosa to Australia understand why the Moon has phases.

Website Brings Lessons of September 11 to Your Classroom

What will you do with your classes on September 11? Educators across the country are asking themselves that question as the anniversary of the terrorist attacks approaches—and many of them have come up with good answers.

NEA's Health Information Network has created a website to help educators share those ideas. Educators can write their lesson plans and other ideas on a website form and read what other people plan to do.

"Anniversaries are important to recovery," says HIN Director Jerald Newberry, "Teachers are overloaded and time is a challenge. We can relieve some of that pressure."

Among the first lesson plans posted on the site is a set of units developed by the Red Cross called "Facing Fear: Helping Children Deal with Terrorism and Tragic Events."

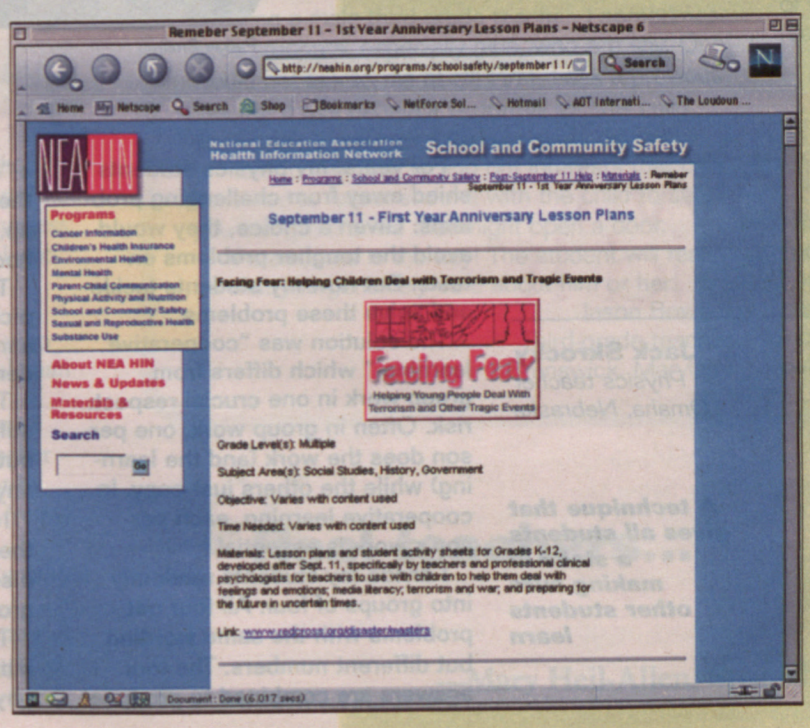
In these lessons, students learn to cope with feelings of loss and anger, discover how to discern facts from embellished fiction in the media, and consider positive actions in light of a national tragedy. The material is tailored for grades K-2, 3-5, 6-8, or 9-12.

The HIN site includes contributions from other organizations as well, but Newberry believes some of the best, most useful ideas will come from individual educators across the country who are wrestling with how to teach children about a great national tragedy.

Sponsored in part by a $50,000 grant from Johnson & Johnson, the site is designed in the same spirit as the website created by NEA immediately after September 11, which supported educators and parents as they helped children come to terms with what happened.

To contribute your ideas or to read those of other educators, go to http://neahin.org/programs/schoolsafety/september11/index.htm.

—Lauren Fischer


Remeber September 11 – 1st Year Anniversary Lesson Plans – Netscape 6
http://neahin.org/programs/schoolsafety/september11/
Search
NEA HIN
National Education Association Health Information Network
School and Community Safety
Programs
Cancer Information
Children's Health Insurance
Environmental Health
Mental Health
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September 11 - First Year Anniversary Lesson Plans
Facing Fear: Helping Children Deal with Terrorism and Tragic Events
Facing Fear
Helping Young People Deal With Terrorism and Other Tragic Events
Grade Level(s): Multiple
Subject Area(s): Social Studies, History, Government
Objective: Varies with content used
Time Needed: Varies with content used
Materials: Lesson plans and student activity sheets for Grades K-12, developed after Sept. 11, specifically by teachers and professional clinical psychologists for teachers to use with children to help them deal with feelings and emotions; media literacy; terrorism and war; and preparing for the future in uncertain times.
Link: www.redcross.org/disaster/masters

Share your ideas and find out what other educators are planning for September 11 on this website created by the NEA Health Information Network.

Time Machines and Basic Facts

How one Atlanta school meets the challenge of educating low-income children.

Imagine you have a time-traveling parachute and you're about to land in Africa in the 1600s. What should you pack for the trip? Whom will you meet? What will you do if they confront you?

And what exactly does "confront" mean?

Such are the challenges facing first graders in Antonio Coleman's classroom at Burgess Elementary School in Atlanta. In this journey to the past, Coleman teaches geography, history, and tough vocabulary words like "confront," "territorial," and "culture."

Burgess serves a low-income neighborhood—84 percent of its children get free or reduced-price lunches. Some educators say such children need instruction focused on drill and repetition. The staff here disagrees. They don't take multiplication tables or literacy for granted, but they think the best way to teach the basics is to involve children in learning adventures—like Coleman's mission to the African past.

When Atlanta principals were asked to choose a school reform model, Burgess Principal Gwendolyn Carter chose a Massachusetts-based school improvement organization called Co-nect, which "stresses the things we were already trying to do, teaching higher-order thinking through project-based learning."

Carter believes that this approach, besides being best for the kids, will also boost test scores. That's essential at so many public schools these days, and Burgess is no exception. Signs reminding staff of the never-ending effort to meet the state requirements are all over the building. "QCC LA 1.20: Reads with fluency and expression," says one sign, and another states, "QCC LA 1.35: Writes about self-selected topics."

There's also advice posted for children: "Test tip—When you are asked to draw a conclusion, you must make a good guess. The correct answer is usually not written in the article."

To get his first graders motivated for the learning effort, Antonio Coleman starts the year by asking them to touch the ceiling. That's not easy for six-year-olds, but eventually, someone thinks of standing on a chair. Then they try a table. Finally, standing on a chair on a table (with Coleman spotting to prevent falls), the children discover that a very short person can reach a very high ceiling.

This, Coleman explains to them, is what their year is going to be like: He will set high standards, and they will reach them. "Try everything you can, be creative, and you'll find ways to meet my expectations," he says.

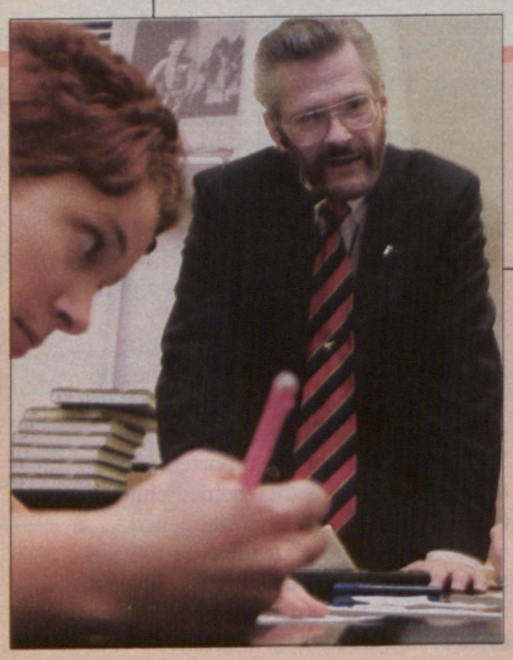
Teaching with imagination takes more than talent. It requires ongoing professional development and staff support. Using some of the funds allocated for the Co-nect program, Carter hired LaPaul Shelton, an experienced teacher, to provide that support. He is the Co-nect "facilitator" at the school.

Shelton says his goal is to get children so involved in the lesson that they become the leaders and their teachers can be facilitators.

On a typical day, he observes three or four classes, demonstrates a couple of lessons, meets with teachers to talk over what he saw in their work or what they saw in his, and spends the rest of

Antonio Coleman and his students get ready to watch the effects of a hurricane on a model, part of their investigation of natural disasters.

Parker Smith



How I Did It

Jack Skrocky
Physics teacher
Omaha, Nebraska

A technique that gives all students a stake in making sure other students learn

For years, my physics students shied away from challenging problems. Given a choice, they would avoid the tougher problems on tests. But now my students tackle and solve these problems.

The solution was "cooperative learning," which differs from group work in one crucial respect: risk. Often in group work, one person does the work (and the learning) while the others just copy. In cooperative learning, each person's work is essential.

I divide my students randomly into groups of four. All four get problems with the same wording but different numbers. The four answers are combined to produce a "check number," which I give them. If their answers don't add up, they have to work as a team to find the errors.

Then comes the risk. I randomly pick a team member to solve the same kind of problem. That student's score counts for the team.

This is extra credit. Students still take chapter tests individually, but it's rare for students to get anything but a perfect score!

I used to see heads down on the desks, kids tuning out. Now discussions are going on in every group, involving every student.

This approach can be used in many other situations besides physics problems.

his time making banners, bulletin boards, or whatever else teachers need him to do. "My job is to make their job easier," he says.

Their job is hard. Both the city and the state have given the schools targets for improving many aspects of student achievement and attendance. Each year, the targets are raised. Carter says her school is doing well, meeting or exceeding 68 percent of the targets in the most recent accounting.

Of course, the faculty know more about their students' successes and failures than scores can reflect. Coleman beams with pride about one little boy. "At the beginning, he was at the bottom of the barrel. He cried every day," Coleman recalls. "But he had potential. I took him out for lunch on a Saturday. I invested time in him. By midyear, he was hiding books inside books—fun books inside textbooks. He had gotten turned on to reading. Then he started pulling away from the pack, and by the end of the year he was in the top six."

Has he succeeded with every child? No, Coleman concedes. Two of his children last year did not go on to second grade.

What makes the difference? "Support at home," he says, without hesitation. The student who soared had a mother who brought him to Burgess' Saturday school and after-school program and sometimes stayed and worked with him there.

What will happen to the two who didn't go on to second grade? Coleman will keep working with them.

"I asked for them back because I know them better than a new teacher would," he says. "I'm hoping that by midyear, they will catch up. They're my responsibility." ✔

—Alain Jehlen

For more: Call Burgess Elementary at 404/371-4850. Learn more about Co-nect at www.co-nect.net.

[DILEMMA]

How do you get a shy or reluctant student to participate in class activities?

Ted Pitts

Students must feel it is safe to give a wrong answer. It is tempting to call on children whose hands immediately stab the air when you ask a question. I use sticks with student names so they get the same number of chances to respond. And I work like mad to give a student every chance to give a correct answer. I may give a hint. I tell them it is okay to be wrong. We often learn more from wrong answers than right ones.

Denise Brasile
Fourth-grade teacher
Scottsdale, Arizona

■ I use team activities to let the shy student work with one other person and gradually increase the number of team members. My students give oral presentations, first in a group, then as individuals. My grading rubric gives students useful feedback and allows me to record positive comments—not praise but specific strengths to build on.

Pamela Galus
High school science teacher
Omaha, Nebraska

■ In "randomly" calling on students, choose shy students in the middle—not first, not last. Structure questions so you can amplify a whispered one-word answer into a complete response. But don't move on without an answer.

Distinguish between three brands of shyness:
a) fear of talking;
b) lack of ability or confidence;
c) coming from a culture that values shyness.

Ask questions that are not too easy for bright students and not too hard for the less able.

Paula Drew
Middle school language teacher
Parsippany, New Jersey

■ Being a male third-grade teacher, I sometimes have students, especially girls, who are shy. One would not talk to me at all! First, I ask a previous teacher if this behavior is normal for this child. Then I ask the parents for recommendations.

Talk to the child to find out interests that can be linked to lessons. Joke with the child to see if you can get a smile that might open a door.

Persistence is the key! The student will realize that you genuinely care about him or her.

Jason Bowser
Third-grade teacher
Brunswick, Maryland

■ I had two shy twins. I discovered that they loved WWF wrestling and soap operas. I began talking with them every day about their interests, and they started to respond. (I had to watch the TV shows.) Eventually, I had the class involved in a daily, five-minute discussion led by the shy students.

Their mother told me this has carried over into their home life as well. She is thrilled.

Deborah Southall
Seventh- and eighth-grade special education teacher
Pine Hill, Alabama

■ I have spent much of this year trying to get a kindergartner to participate in our class activities. He volunteered frequently, but when called upon, he had nothing to say. No amount of rewards or cajoling helped. He would sit at his table and stare.

I thought about the building block of self-esteem—real work. I made him my official plant waterer and the results were noticeable immediately. Now when he held up his hand, he had a response. He began interacting with the other children and doing his papers. He is coming out of his shell. It will take him another year to be ready for first grade, but we are seeing progress.

Sue Sanders
Kindergarten teacher
Kenton, Ohio

Got an Answer?

How do you keep your lesson plans from getting stale?

E-mail your answer to dilemma2@list.nea.org. Or send by regular mail, or fax to 202/822-7206. Include your name, city, state, and job title. If published, you will receive an *NEA Today* mug!

"Real teachers... can eat a whole egg salad sandwich on a 30-second bathroom break.**"**

—Mary Heil-Allen, Spanish teacher, Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin

Photos by Sean Sperry

Left: Ashley Martinson-Voshell (left) and Ashley Middleton play ping pong at a Sparks outing.

Opposite: Sparks participants practice relaxation techniques during a retreat.

Sparking Interest

New members get connected to the profession—and the Association.

Ashley Martinson-Voshell always knew she wanted to become a teacher. Both of her parents were teachers, and she couldn't imagine pursuing a different profession.

But after a year and a half of teaching, the first-grade educator still didn't know much about her Association.

"I knew the people were probably really nice, but I didn't know where to start," says Martinson-Voshell, who teaches at Evergreen Heights Elementary School in Washington. "I wanted to learn more about NEA and our local because I didn't really know what they provided."

That's when Martinson-Voshell discovered Sparks, a Washington Education Association program created four years ago to connect new teachers with their peers and their local Association. After a weekend retreat with Sparks, Martinson-Voshell decided to become an Association representative for her school. She attended the weekend retreat this past spring with 30 other educators.

"I realized we all had the same questions," she says. "The program motivated me a lot. Now I'm going to be a building rep."

Sparks retreats provide a safe environment where new members can share what's on their minds and also build a positive connection with the Association, says Eddie Westerman, a WEA communications field representative and creator of Sparks.

During a retreat, which lasts from a few days to a week, participants don't sit passively in a lecture hall listening to presentations. They're stretched out on the floor and draped over couches in a bed-and-breakfast, discussing everything from classroom management to the role of a building rep.

Teachers and education support professionals with fewer than six years of experience can attend the retreats. Organizers survey the participants beforehand to find out what information the attendees want to learn. Association staff, officers, and former Sparks participants facilitate the sessions, but they always encourage new members to ask questions and share their experiences. The weekends often include outings with former Sparks participants, skits, sessions on stress and wellness, and information about the Association. At the end of the retreat, participants research a topic and present their own session to their colleagues.

"By teaching one another they build this network and they have this confirmation that they are not alone," says UniServ Director Diane Flynn, the program's new coordinator. "They start to find a community within their Association, which I think is an integral part of the union."

More than 600 members have participated in Sparks retreats in Washington, says Westerman. Affiliates in Oregon, Hawaii, Nevada, Idaho, Alaska, California, and Delaware also offer the program.

"Most new teachers are thrown into a building where people already are established, and here there was a group saying 'you are not alone,' so we instantly bonded," says Dee Brastad, a fourth-year teacher at Southridge High School in Kennewick, Washington.

Want to get more involved in your Association? Sparks participants have some advice:

• Ask your building rep or local officers for information;

Two-Minute Tips

Sink or Float

Here's a classroom management strategy that focuses on holistic and individual accountability. Begin each day by drawing a ship on the board. When a student disrupts the class, ask the disruptive student to erase a portion of the ship. This implies that the ship (the class) is sinking. At the end of the day, if part of the ship remains, the class has floated. As the year progresses, you can draw a smaller ship, indicating higher expectations for class behavior.

Kendra Duncan
Memphis, Tennessee

Writing Tapes

When my fourth graders have completed rough drafts of their writing, I always confer with each student individually.

When I can't meet with students one on one, I read through a student's writing exercise and record my comments on an audio tape.

Students then read their rough drafts as they listen to the tape. The students can replay their tapes if necessary. The tapes also come in handy when a student is absent.

Marsha Taylor
Greensburg, Pennsylvania

Works4Me
nea's e-mail classroom tip of the week!

Have a great idea? You can pass along your tip to *NEA Today*'s 2.7 million readers in one of five ways:

- By mail: *NEA Today*, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036
- By phone: 202/822-7201
- By fax: 202/822-7206
- By e-mail: Ideas@neatoday.nea.org
- Through the Web: www.nea.org/neatoday

• Don't be afraid to ask questions;
• Find other young or beginning teachers with common interests;
• Attend your local Association meetings.
• Try not to get discouraged;
• Encourage your local leaders to learn more about Sparks.

"When you're new you spend a lot of time at school just trying to manage your time," says Martinson-Voshell. "The Association has a lot to offer, but to know what it offers you have to get involved." ✔

—Kristen Loschert

RESOURCES

First-Year Fumbles
The NEA Professional Library has released a new revised edition of *Pitfalls and Potholes*, part of the NEA Checklist Series. This handy guide includes tips for landing a job, managing student conduct, getting along with administrators, avoiding lawsuits, teaching with confidence, and more. To order a copy or for more information, go to http://home.nea.org/books/.

New Teacher Survival Guide
Check out the U.S. Department of Education's *Survival Guide for New Teachers.* This publication includes reflections from 53 award-winning first-year teachers who talk candidly about their successes and setbacks. The book includes tips for working with colleagues, administrators, parents, and students. For a free copy, go to www.ed.gov/pubs/survivalguide/.

Teach Like a Pro
Looking for lesson plans or a place to share ideas with other K-6 teachers? Visit www.proteacher.net/. This site includes lesson ideas for reading and language arts, science, math, social studies, and the fine arts. Check out the "Busy Board" message board for other ideas from fellow teachers.

Nobody Ever Told Me

Dress Code Red

As every high school teacher knows, when the thermometer soars, girls' necklines plummet.

On a particularly hot day I noticed one of my students wearing a revealing top. I was anxious to begin the day's lesson, so I did not send her to her locker for a jacket. In the middle of class, the young girl's breast escaped from her shirt. As I fought to maintain my composure, I scanned the room. No one had noticed the fashion faux pas, including the unsuspecting girl.

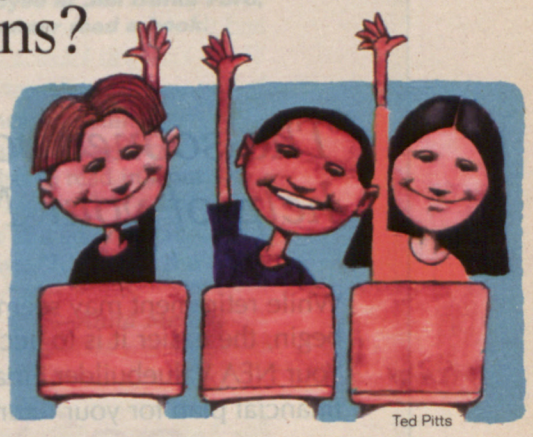
My mind raced — to call her name would surely draw attention, but what else could I do? How long would it take her to realize that she had revealed her undergarments to her classmates? Much to my relief, and her horror, the student soon realized her mistake and quickly and discreetly put herself back together. The student and I never discussed the situation, and I never saw the top again.

Erin Barrett
High school English teacher
Downingtown, Pennsylvania

Got a story?
E-mail kloschert@nea.org.

[DILEMMA]

How do you get your students to ask good questions?



Ted Pitts

In my seventh- and eighth-grade language arts classes, I challenge my students to ask simple and open-ended questions. I ask questions that require some imagination and often have no set answers.

Christian Milord
Junior high English teacher
Brea, California

■ On the wall in the front of my classroom, I have a sign that says "ASK QUESTIONS." It stretches two-thirds of the way across the wall. The sign is one of the main things I point out on the first day of school. This way, from the very beginning we have open lines of communication.

Toni Roccia
Elementary science teacher
Warsaw, Virginia

■ I use a list of "wh" words (who, what, when, where, why, how, which) to help students form questions. I remind the class that when we ask questions, we hope to get more information about the subject. I flip through the "wh" words and read them to help stimulate the beginning of some other types of questions.

Karen V. Adams
Kindergarten teacher
Madras, Oregon

■ If you really want to show your children how to "think about their own thinking" then you must read at least one of these two books: *Mosaic of Thought* by Ellin Oliver Keene and Susan Zimmerman and *Strategies that Work* by Stephanie Harvey and Anne Goudvis.

Samantha Duffield
Second-grade teacher
Bristow, Virginia

■ From the beginning of the year I teach students what a good question is and model it in our writing block. I encourage students to ask questions about the class discussion and to think of questions that cannot be answered with a yes or no.

Cathay Qualls
Fifth-grade teacher
Tulsa, Oklahoma

Got an Answer?
How do you deal with a child who comes to school sick?

E-mail your answer to dilemma2@list.nea.org. Or send by regular mail, or fax to 202/822-7206. Include your name, city, state, and job. If published, you will receive an *NEA Today* mug!

"I've started my career, so when should I begin saving for retirement?"

The sooner you get started, the better. It's easier with the help of your NEA Valuebuilder Financial Counselor.

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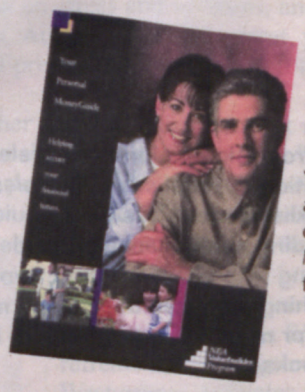

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A Community Rallies Around Reading

In one California town, NEA members reap the benefits of a reading program created and trumpeted by the local newspaper.

In Sandra Ballard's second-grade classroom at Franklin Elementary School in Bakersfield, California, it's not unusual to have a different visitor every day of the week. In fact, Ballard counts on them. That's because these visitors help small groups of her students overcome their frustrations around reading—and make great academic progress, too.

The visitors, employees of local car dealership Jim Burke Ford, adopted the struggling second-grade students three years ago as part of the Community Reading Project, a county-wide tutoring program that places volunteer readers in second-grade classrooms. The mentors rotate reading with students selected by Ballard.

"These students are able to read but struggle to keep up with their peers," explains Ballard. "With the help of these reading mentors, my students are making great progress."

The Community Reading Project began the spring of 1999 when the publisher and staff of the *Bakersfield Californian* became alarmed by one fact well-known to literacy advocates: If children aren't reading at grade level by third grade, they have only a one in eight chance of catching up. *Californian* publisher Ginger Moorehead not only recruited her employees as mentors to local schools but also urged area businesses to do the same. The newspaper then promoted the program with a series of articles highlighting schools and mentors.

Today, 250 volunteers visit schools throughout the community each semester.

Before entering the classroom, the reading coaches spend time learning precisely how to coach. "We go over cueing systems like taking a child on a picture walk through a book to find out the meaning of the book and how to help children recognize consonants and vowels," explains Teresa Irvin, project administrator and English and language arts coordinator with Kern County School Superintendent's Office. "They learn how to guide the child's reading and help the child problem solve rather than offering the correct words."

Once trained, the volunteers spend one hour per week in the classroom, working with up to four children. At each school, program coordinators like NEA member Leslie Linney help the mentors settle in. "Many of the children in this program are in danger of falling behind their peers in reading. It's amazing how one hour a week can make a difference in kids' lives," says Linney.

For Ballard, accepting the mentors in her classroom every day was easy. "I know sometimes we teachers are reluctant to have someone in the room every day of the year, but when you realize these volunteers are there for the very same reason you are—to help the children learn—the transition is easy," she says.

"Each child spends time reading and bonding with the mentor," explains Ballard. "That scene is repeated with a different volunteer the next day and the next. By the end of the week, the student has spent time with five tutors who cared enough to help them read."

For her part, Ballard keeps the volunteers organized and on track with the reading. Three years into the project, she's thrilled with the results. "Each year I've had students who were two levels below the rest of the class at the beginning of the year and who brought their reading up to grade level," Ballard says. "I even had one child who was a 'select mute'—she didn't speak in first grade. But with the help of her reading coaches, she built up enough confidence and courage not only to speak, but also to read in front of the class.

"That's the mark of a good collaborative effort," she says. "It's all for the sake of the children." ✔

—Anita Merina

The *Bakersfield Californian*

Cleophas Reaves, Jr., an employee at Jim Burke Ford, helps second grader Leanne Kramer read a book.

Read Across America All Year Long

NEA's Read Across America welcomes you back to school with a year-long literacy calendar. The calendar, complete with key dates and celebrations plus suggested activities, can be found at www.nea.org/readacross.

In September, celebrate International Literacy Day September 8 or observe the Week of Banned Books (September 21-28). You can also start planning for NEA's Read Across America celebration, held March 3, 2003. Check out NEA's Read Across website for resource kit materials, interviews with authors, booklists, and materials in Spanish. And don't forget to enter NEA's Read Across Back to School Bonanza with Cybersurfari, offering treasure hunts for elementary, middle, and high school students and teachers.

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You Can Do It, Too!

If you want to bring reading coaches into your classroom, you don't have to go far. Here are some tips and lessons learned from teachers and coaches.

Start with the research to make your case. Go to NEA's Read Across America website, www.nea.org/readacross for facts about children's literacy and suggested reading activities.

Contact your local newspaper, business, and Rotary or Kiwanis club. Many of these organizations are looking for opportunities to connect with local schools.

Don't forget NEA-Retired. Your local or state NEA-Retired affiliate wants to get involved, and NEA-Retired members make terrific reading volunteers.

Set up a sound training program for reading mentors complete with handbooks on coaching readers.

Organize materials for the mentors. Mentors are much more effective if they are well-trained and have materials ready to use.

Douglas Jones

"Never smile before Thanksgiving"—is that a good policy?

yes

I warn new teachers, "Don't be 'nice.'"

That is, be aware that you are a target. When school begins, you are being checked out on all sides. If you are looking back at those "mean" teachers of your school days and thinking you aren't going to be like them, better forget it! Those kids will know all the spots to hit in your personality by the time you pass out the supply list! This is not a sales pitch for meanness—no, no. It is a warning that a teacher must be on guard.

Students love to scope out ways to set you off, addle you, divert you from your goals for learning. Given the opening (however tiny), they will work you like a violin! Of course, you want to smile! Go ahead—but put something of "you'll be sorry if...." behind that smile that conveys very definitely who calls the shots. Laugh if you want to—but watch out for the trap that may be hidden behind the effort to get you to laugh.

Don't smile until Thanksgiving, but through your sternness, get across to your students: "You are important, you are capable, I expect the best from you, and yes, I love you."

Better than a smiling, cajoling, candy-dispensing, reward-giving teacher is one who may talk like you'll be skinned alive if you twitch your nose, but whose actions show he or she is in charge, expects the best from students, and can also be trusted to see you through a tough time.

One day when I was dressing down my students for their behavior, one of them blurted out, "But you love us anyway, don't you, Mrs. McNeely?" Since he was one of the central targets, I asked him "Why would I love you? Look at you!" He laughed and responded "But you do, don't you?" I laughed, too, and said, "Yes, I do—but I'll kill you anyway if you don't behave." And I truly did love him and most of the others—and oh, I still miss them and wonder if they are okay.

Funny—those who were the most troublesome, the actors, always in the soup—were the ones who came calling years later and said, "I learned a lot from you." ✔

PAT MORSE-McNEELY retired two years ago after 24 years as a secondary social studies, language arts, and special education teacher and guidance counselor in San Antonio, Stockdale, and Dallas, Texas. She also writes poetry.

no

Two of my three brothers were teachers briefly—very briefly. When I decided to become an English teacher, they thought I had lost my mind. One brother's sage advice: "When you get your first class, remember not to smile until Thanksgiving." His adage wasn't exactly original. It represents many teachers' philosophies. In fact, many of my own teachers seemed grim-mouthed throughout the first semester each year. But, I must say, those were not the teachers who influenced me the most.

Many teachers seem to believe that being warm and friendly and maintaining rigorous academic standards are mutually exclusive. They assume that the well-liked teacher is a pushover. The notion that students will eat you alive if you appear kind and nurturing fosters an us-versus-them mentality.

The first two ideas I relay to my students are that they are welcome members in a learning community and that my academic standards are lofty. The establishment of my classroom as an academic haven is essential to my pedagogy. In order for scholarly ideas to flow freely, students must understand that their ideas are encouraged and valid. If those ideas are met with a cheerless demeanor, the student may feel intimidated and lose intellectual confidence.

Today's teachers are no longer mere purveyors of information. In our classrooms, we must create an atmosphere where students thrive academically, emotionally, and socially, and maintain high standards despite budget cuts, high-stakes testing, overcrowded classrooms, and a lack of parent support.

For many of my students, the five hours I spend with them in the classroom each week is considerably more time than they spend with their parents. As the family unit has continued to disintegrate, teachers have become the constant adult figures in children's lives. Our role as nurturers is unquestionable; it is a responsibility we should accept with a smile from the time a student walks across the threshold of our classroom until the day he or she crosses the stage, diploma in hand. ✔

CHRISTIE GOLD teaches English at Freedom High School in Tampa, Florida. She has taught for 10 years and was her district's Teacher of the Year for 2001-2002. In 2001, she won a Dow Jones Newspaper Fund award as an outstanding student newspaper advisor.

What's Your Opinion?

"Never smile before Thanksgiving"—is that a good policy?
To vote, visit our website at www.nea.org/neatoday. See the results instantly.

Should all students be bilingual?
The tally on this Debate question from the last issue of *NEA Today:*
84% Yes **16% No**

Is "abstinence only" the best sex education policy for schools? If you'd like to take part in this future Debate, send a brief note to Alain Jehlen, ajehlen@nea.org.

Who Profits When For-Profits Run Schools?

Money changes hands—but student achievement doesn't budge.

Susan Sanford

When education management organizations (EMOs) emerged in the 1990s, proponents vowed that private firms could successfully manage public schools, earn a profit, and teach the public education "monopoly" a few things in the process. With Edison Schools, Inc., possibly the best-known EMO, dogged by financial and management problems, let's look at these firms' track record.

How many schools are being managed by EMOs?

National data are scarce. Edison Schools, Inc., the nation's largest EMO, runs more than 130 schools with more than 75,000 students. Its size would make it one of the 50 biggest school districts.

EMOs have acquired considerable business from charter schools. Of the nation's 2,400 charter schools, between 250 and 400 are estimated to be managed by EMOs.

Have EMOs introduced innovative techniques to schools?

Proponents of privatization argue that EMOs would innovate and that other public schools would reap the benefits of their breakthrough ideas. In fact, most of the ideas proffered by EMOs—such as increased use of technology, integrated curriculum, or team teaching—already exist in the public schools.

"Without question, there is no evidence of 'revolutionary' breakthroughs by EMOs with respect to curriculum, instructional strategies, or use of technologies," notes Henry Levin of the National Center for the Study of Privatization in Education.

Moreover, many contracts between EMOs and districts stipulate that instructional models and materials are proprietary, so schools may have to pay for any good ideas and techniques.

Are students in schools managed by EMOs learning more?

In its last annual report, released in fall 2001, Edison reported on 74 of the 113 schools it operated that year. Sixty-two of them had raised their scores, eight had declined, and four were unchanged. Although EMOs such as Edison frequently cite higher student achievement in the schools they operate, other analysts offer a different conclusion.

Gary Miron and colleagues at the Evaluation Center at Western Michigan University reviewed results at 10 schools Edison had operated for more than four years. They found that student achievement at the Edison schools began at levels below national norms and did increase—but no faster than student achievement in other district schools.

One of the most carefully controlled studies was carried out in Miami/Dade County, Florida, where Edison managed the Henry Reeves Elementary School from 1996 to 2001. The achievement of pupils at Reeves did not exceed those of students in other district schools over the course of the project—even though Reeves students received 30 more instructional days per year.

Moreover, a study by Miron and Christopher Nelson found that Michigan charter schools run by EMOs actually scored worse than those not run by EMOs on all measures save one.

Are private management firms more efficient?

Levin says EMOs have tried three basic strategies to cut costs: 1) hire less experienced teachers, 2) provide a bare-bones pedagogy and implement standard operating procedures across sites, and 3) recruit and retain students who are less demanding of resources, meaning fewer students with moderate to severe behavioral or learning needs.

In addition to cutting costs, privatization was supposed to make operations run more smoothly and earn profits for shareholders. "The paradox is that the EMOs' costs are considerably higher because of generous staffing, salaries, and benefits in their central headquarters—with stringent cost controls at school sites," says Levin.

How do EMOs serve the unique needs of local communities?

To successfully operate multiple schools, EMOs have to develop and market a system of teaching and learning that it can export to far-flung sites. In business, this becomes known as the company's "brand." But "the whole concept of creating 'brand' is inimical to the notion of local control of schools," says NEA staffer Heidi Steffens. "The central control required to create schools that look and feel and educate like all a company's other schools contradicts the need for every school to respond to its students and community."

What's the future of EMOs?

It's impossible to predict, but the path to profits has been turbulent and—so far—unsuccessful. Edison has seen its stock drop from $36 to a dollar per share. Steffens notes that Edison has lost, or is about to lose, a total of 22 schools under contract because of low test scores, declining student enrollment, or high teacher turnover.

The *New York Times* summed the situation up best. "The only way to improve public education is to provide every student with a bright, well-trained teacher and an orderly, well-run school. That tends to be labor-intensive—and expensive—and may never be profitable on the scale that the stock market requires."

—John O'Neil

For more:

- **Visit the Edison Project homepage at www.edisonschools.com.**
- **Read *What's Public About Charter Schools: Lessons Learned About Choice and Accountability* (Corwin 2002), by Gary Miron and Christopher Nelson. The book lists details of the role and effects of EMOs in Michigan's charter schools. For a summary or to order, go to www.corwinpress.com.**
- **Check out the Miami/Dade study at www.dade.k12.fl.us/edeval/edison.pdf.**

Photos by Alden Pellett

Sue Ann O'Brien (left) and Mary Lee Grigsby organized their local's campaign for a livable wage.

[COMPENSATION]

Taking It To the Streets

Paraeducators rally a Vermont town for better wages and campaign for new school board members.

After 11 years as a paraeducator in Winooski, Vermont, Sue Ann O'Brien earns less than $13,000 a year, almost $4,000 less than what her mother collects in Social Security and retirement benefits. O'Brien's salary falls short of the $22,727 per year the state says a single person must earn to afford to live in Vermont.

O'Brien's salary is not unusual.

Some of her colleagues must work two or three jobs just to get by, O'Brien says. "I have friends who are single parents who can't even afford birthday presents for their kids," she adds. "We've been working way under wage for years."

Fellow members of the Winooski Education Association agree and think it's time paraeducators earn a livable wage. This fall, they just might get it.

Thanks to the efforts of O'Brien and Mary Lee Grigsby, vice president of the local, three members of the school board now support a livable wage. When the paraeducators start bargaining their new contract next month, they will turn to their school board members for support. After all, the local helped get two of them elected.

"We were looking for somebody to be on the school board who would agree that paraprofessionals deserve a livable wage," says O'Brien. "We started meeting with people and getting a platform together for the campaign."

About a year ago, O'Brien and Grigsby, both paraeducators at John F. Kennedy Elementary School, began educating their colleagues about the need for a livable wage. Paraeducators in Winooski, a small working class city near Burlington, start at $7.25 an hour. A paraeducator with 12 years of experience doesn't earn much more at $9.06 per hour. The district does not have a step system or index that coordinates salary with experience, O'Brien says.

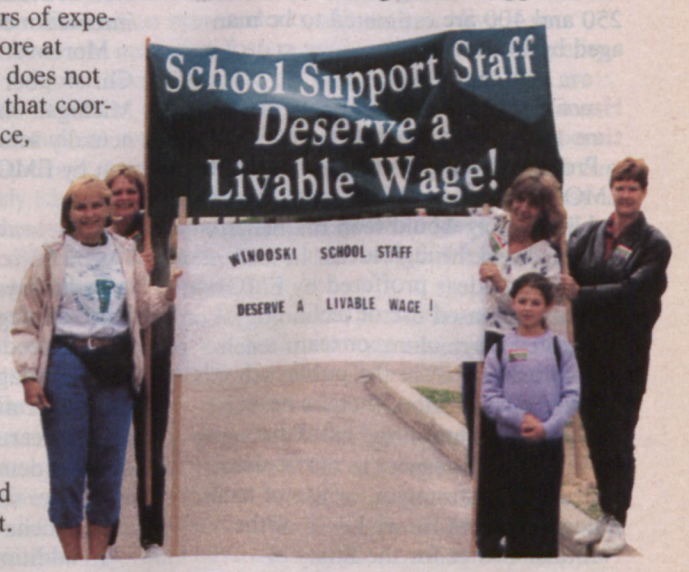
O'Brien and Grigsby formed a livable wage committee. They presented information to their colleagues and rallied school and community support for their cause.

They knew their efforts wouldn't mean much unless they bargained the new salary into their contract and gained school board support. At the time, the paraeducators had one supporter on the five-member board, but the other board members consistently outvoted his motions, says Grigsby.

The terms of two other board members expired in the spring. With the help of Vermont-NEA, the local looked for candidates to challenge the incumbent board members. The team recruited two former paraeducators, Jodi Harrington and Wendy Scully, to enter the race.

"The local did a textbook campaign with a lot of door-to-door work, not an easy task in Vermont in the middle of winter," says Ellen David Friedman, Vermont-NEA organizer. "This group does not even begin to bargain until the fall and they already have transformed the environment."

O'Brien and her committee took to the streets with their campaign. They surveyed community members about livable wage and gathered support for



Going the Extra Mile

Minnesota Paraeducators Win State Foundation Grants

The Education Minnesota Foundation for Excellence in Teaching and Learning honored five educational assistants with grants this past spring.

Mary Neiman, Mary DeLuney, Mary Ann Holtzleiter, and **Kathleen Serrill** from Minneapolis and **Danya Troxel** from St. Paul each received $1,000 for professional development and training.

Grant recipients must share their training with their local Associations and train other ESPs when possible. This is the third year the Foundation has awarded the Professional Development and Leadership Grants to education assistants and other support professionals.

After her training, Neiman plans to develop a mentor system among the instructional assistants in her school. DeLuney's training will prepare her for a school-based needs assessment that will evaluate the support systems in place for students.

Meanwhile, Holtzleiter, Serrill, and Troxel will learn more about student behavior management.

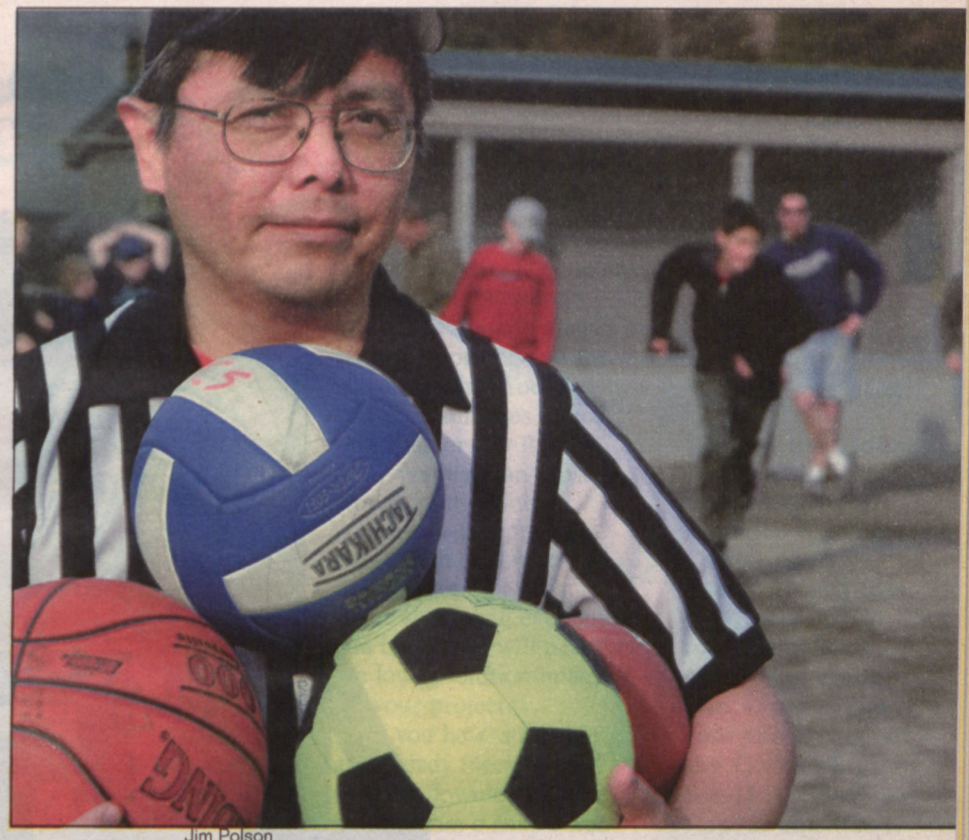
Finding Faith During Illness

Before she became a paraeducator in 1999, Michigan member **Nancy Groves** spent 20 years counseling patients dealing with serious illnesses. In January, Patient Press released a new book called *Faith and Illness: Reflections on God's Sustaining Love* that documents Groves' experiences as a medical social worker.

During her previous career, Groves spent countless hours listening to patients share their internal struggles and fears, so she wrote her book from a patient's point of view.

[PROFILE]

Giving Kids a Sporting Chance



Jim Polson

Name: **Lawrence "Woody" Widmark**
Job Title: Community Schools Sports and Recreation Coordinator, Sitka, Alaska

What I Do In My Job: I plan adult and youth recreation and indoor and outdoor sports. During the fall we have adult basketball and in the winter we offer youth basketball and coed volleyball. During the summer we have T-ball and outdoor youth soccer and we have a track meet after school ends. Most of my activities are at the middle school. It's really busy. My day starts at two in the afternoon and gets done around 11 o'clock at night. At times we're busy seven days a week.

The Most Rewarding Part of My Job: Helping people and watching the kids smile. It's rewarding to have a job well done and for people to say thank you. I'm basically a shy person, so a thank you or a smile is rewarding for me.

Why I Do What I Do: I love what I do. This is my home town, I grew up here. I have the best job in the world. I can't believe I get paid for doing what I really like to do.

My Greatest Passion: Giving kids an opportunity to participate. Kids just need to participate in something and get recognized.

My Favorite Pastime: Baseball and sports in general. I've coached little leagues and have been blessed to coach teams that have won little league championships.

My Community Involvement Includes: I'm the tribal chair for Sitka Tribe Alaska. We have 3,100 tribal citizens enrolled. I participate in the Bara Nof Island Housing Authority. I'm a member of the Elks Lodge, and we help out with the youth soccer program and the Elks Hoop Shoot. I'm an adjutant for the Sons of the American Legion. I also serve the elders at the local senior center on Fridays. ✔

RESOURCES

Fight Privatization
Learn how to protect your school district from private contractors! Check out the updated privatization resources on the NEA ESP website. The site includes background information about privatization trends in public education and local government, links to news stories about problems with contractor services, and links to other resources and research. Go to www.nea.org/esp/privatization/index.html.

New in the "Quality Workforce" series
Health and Student Services — Building a Quality Workforce is the latest addition to NEA's "Quality Workforce" series.

The 32-page booklet highlights some of the challenges health and student services ESP encounter in their work. The booklet includes sections about federal and state statutes, the national nursing shortage, eating disorders, tattoos and body piercings, and employee safety.

For a copy, call 202/822-7131 or e-mail ESP.Program@nea.org. The booklet also is available online at www.nea.org/esp/jobs/healthqual_intro.html.

For Paraprofessionals
The website for the National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals (NRCP) includes articles and training materials for and about paraeducators. Paras also can browse the NRCP bookstore, which includes books on special education, teacher-para relationships, and other topics. Go to www.nrcpara.org for more information.

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their candidates. Grigsby and Harrington even became public notaries and registered voters.

In March, the two paraeducators achieved a significant victory when Jodi Harrington won a seat on the school board. Meanwhile, Wendy Scully defeated the incumbent school board chairman, Thomas Kane. Before the paraeducators could celebrate the second win, however, Kane requested a recount, which awarded him the seat.

Scully challenged the vote in superior court. A court-directed recount sustained Kane's victory, but a judge ordered a new election after discovering irregularities in the electoral process. Three weeks later, Scully won the seat and joined the board.

"The last board meeting I went to was a whole different experience," says Grigsby. "But we're not resting on our laurels by any means. We're ready for the next fight."

The paraeducators will ask for $10.93 an hour, the state livable wage for an urban area, when they bargain next month. The local also plans to support two more candidates in the next school board election in March.

"We feel that what we've done is wonderful," says Grigsby, "but it's still just the beginning." ✔

—Kristen Loschert

The book guides people through the many emotions they experience during a serious illness and addresses the adjustments patients and their families often must make, Groves says.

Groves currently works as a teacher assistant at the Learning Resource Center for Special Education at Andover High School in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan.

Alaska School Nurse Receives Top State Honor
The Alaska School Nurses' Association named Kim Dye, member of the Anchorage Education Association, as the 2002 Alaska School Nurse of the Year.

Dye, who works at Kincaid Elementary School, developed a database program called the Health Office Computer Log to streamline the process used to document health cases in the Anchorage School District. According to Dye, the new program saves hours of work and is more accurate than the previous process.

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Picture Perfect Project

Dear Web Editor,

My students are working with iMovie® on iMac® computers. I gave them a project in which they used disposable cameras to take pictures of an assigned subject. How should I prepare my students' photos for use in an iMovie?

Should I get the pictures on a disk or CD-ROM, or should I have them developed as prints and then scan them into the computer? Should I have the developer put them on the Web so I can download them?

Gracie Oviedo
Fourth-grade teacher
San Antonio, Texas

***Kids in the House* offers games and activities to teach students about the U.S. Clerk's Office.**

It sounds like you're really engaging students by using technology in fun project-based activities. You certainly seem to understand all of your options for transforming filmed images into digital files. But choosing between these options isn't easy because each option has benefits and drawbacks. I'll try to help you better understand which method will best suit your needs.

Let me start by talking a little bit about the software you're using, in case some readers are unfamiliar with it. Apple's iMovie is the latest software designed primarily for editing digital video on a computer. iMovie makes it easy to combine images, sounds, music, and narration into a single, finished multimedia production. Simply connect your video camera or digital still camera to your Apple computer using a special cable and your images, sound, and video will "spill" directly into the program. Then you can click and drag them into whatever sequence you want. You also can use the cut and paste editing functions.

iMovie currently is available for only the Apple Macintosh computer. For more information about working with iMovie, visit www.apple.com/imovie/edit.html.

Now, back to your question. Through most photo shops you can request traditional negatives and contact sheets for each set of pictures, regardless of how you will receive your final images. Then you can process the film negatives if you or your students want prints of the pictures.

Traditional processing and scanning probably will cost you the most, both in cash and in time. Unless you are a pro at scanning, you probably will spend lots of time adjusting scanner attributes and image quality to capture the best possible scan for each picture. But on the bright side you have the original photograph and you can control the scan by adjusting the image.

Receiving images on a disk or CD-ROM definitely is convenient, but you still will need to transfer the images from the disk to your students' computers. If you don't mind the necessary investment of time, or if students will perform this task, putting your photographs on recordable media is smart. The media lasts longer and allows you to manipulate images both for printing and for screen display. You also can access images stored on a disk or CD-ROM more readily than those stored on the Web.

Most shops provide either high or low resolution images on a disk. Some shops will even give you both. You will need the low resolution images for your project.

If you have a reliable and speedy Internet connection, downloading the photos from a shop's website probably is your best option. Your photographs already are optimized for screen display, adjusted to their best color and contrast, and formatted to the best image size for efficient processing. Plus, you and your students can access the images from any computer with Internet access. Then if you decide you want one or more images in another format, you can submit a request through the website. The length of time images remain on the Web varies among developers.

Got a Question? Ask the Web editor at webeditor@list.nea.org. Or send your questions by regular mail to *NEA Today*, by fax to 202/822-7206, or through the Web at www.nea.org/cet.

Editor's Pick

Kids in the House (left) is the official children's website for the Office of the Clerk. Using this site, geared for middle school students, visitors can explore the role the Office of the Clerk plays in the U.S. House of Representatives. The site includes games and activities that explain how laws are made and how congressional history has influenced today's U.S. government. Students can learn about the legislative process and how it affects them. Visit the site, developed according to the curriculum standards of the Center for Civic Education, at http://clerkkids.house.gov/.

TALK TO US

Have a nifty classroom tip or lesson plan that uses technology? E-mail a short description (under 200 words, please!) to wiredclassroom@list.nea.org.

Is there a website, CD-ROM, or piece of software you can't live without? E-mail your favorites—and why you love them—to myfavoritetech@list.nea.org.

Or send your responses by regular mail to *NEA Today*, or by fax to 202/822-7206, or through the Web at www.nea.org/cet.

Those published here will receive a sparkling *NEA Today* mug!

TechnoTips

Ancient Civilizations

I've designed a new website for my seventh-grade ancient civilizations classes at the Seneca Valley Middle School in western Pennsylvania. I created the site almost entirely in Macromedia Flash® so the content is presented in a dynamic and interactive fashion, almost like a CD-ROM. You can check out the site at www.seneca.k12.pa.us/~msteam4/main.html.

Jay D'Ambrosio
Seventh-grade teacher
Harmony, Pennsylvania

Meeting Basic Human Needs

At the end of a unit on basic human needs, each of my students researches a topic and creates a website using Microsoft® FrontPage®. All of the student websites link to the class website, which makes browsing the various student sites a snap.

Through this assignment, students learn how the Internet functions, the fundamentals of web-page design, and about copyright issues. Check out the sites from last year's class at: http://shelburne.k12.vt.us/TEAMS/Sutton/student/BHN/BHN2001.htm

Jeff Hindes
Middle school social studies teacher
Shelburne, Vermont

Finding School Resources

My favorite website is www.schoolcatalogs.net. When my colleagues or I need to find educational products or resources for our curriculum, we visit this site. We no longer need to search for different vendors who deal in our subjects areas. This site has vendor categories for art, English, math, early childhood, science, and every subject in between. This is a valuable site for beginning teachers as well as veterans.

Michael Maksymiuk
Middle school teacher
Durham, Connecticut

Website Update

The Web address for Dan Chuhta's science website, which appeared in the May issue of *NEA Today*, has changed. The new address is http://fc.sad57.k12.me.us/~Dan_Chuhta.

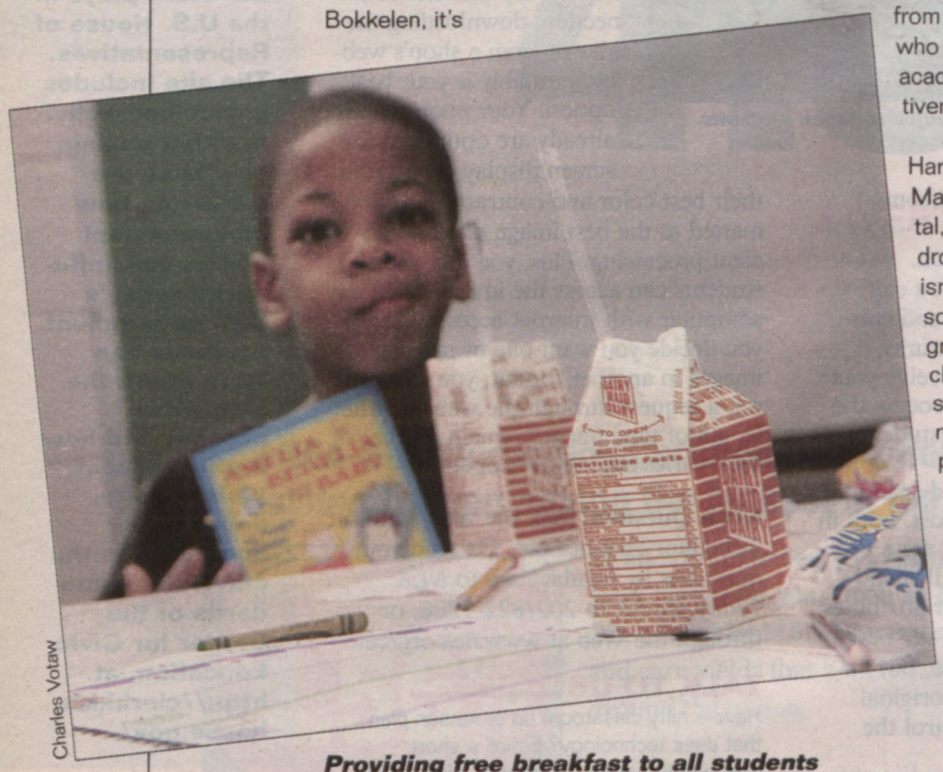
A Morning Boost for Every Child

Subsidized breakfast programs have been around for years, but some schools offer them with a new twist.

It's just before 8 a.m. and the day's activities won't kick off for another 15 minutes at the Van Bokkelen Elementary School in Severn, Maryland. Yet students already sit at their classroom desks, quietly reading. Classical music pipes in over loudspeakers. Teachers move about calmly, smiling.

And the students—all of them—happily consume a breakfast of milk, juice, and fortified buns.

Here is the latest incarnation of the federally funded school breakfast program: The meal is still subsidized, but at Van Bokkelen, it's served to every student—regardless of family income—and it's seamlessly woven into the ritual of the classroom morning. No stigmas, no hassle. Just a surefire way to get nutrients into young bodies right before learning begins.



Charles Votaw

Providing free breakfast to all students increases attentiveness and encourages reading at the Van Bokkelen school.

This so-called "free universal breakfast" started as a pilot program several years ago in a handful of Maryland schools but has now spread to 90 schools in that state and throughout school districts in Minnesota and Massachusetts. Partly funded by the participating states, the initiative is getting rave reviews from teachers and administrators, who say the impact on student academic achievement and attentiveness has been dramatic.

According to researchers at Harvard Medical School and Massachusetts General Hospital, for example, tardiness dropped by half and absenteeism by a third in certain Boston schools that began the program. In Maryland, officials charted a rise in test scores in some schools, along with a noticeable drop in behavior problems.

Intrigued by these results, the U.S. Department of Agriculture is conducting its own three-year study in 144 schools in six states to measure the impact of a universal breakfast program on a host of factors around student learning and behavior.

For now, though, Selecia Hardy, a fourth-grade teacher at Van Bokkelen, doesn't need research to tell her what she's seen with her own eyes. Before the breakfast program started, only about 35 percent of her students ate a subsidized breakfast. Not only were students generally "sluggish," she says, but by midmorning many were complaining of stomach aches or hunger. Now, with everybody eating immediately before teaching begins, students are "happy, excited, motivated to learn, and on-task," she says. "And rarely does anybody ask, 'What time is lunch?'"

The breakfast itself is simple—at Van Bokkelen students can choose from a banana loaf, muffin, bagel, or fortified bun, along with milk and orange juice; other schools offer cereal and yogurt or French toast. But all meet federal nutrition standards and provide one-fourth of the day's recommended levels of protein, calcium, iron, vitamin A, and vitamin C.

The difference: All children are eating, and staff no longer must deal differently with free, reduced-price, or full-pay students. There's no stigma associated with getting a subsidized meal. And, says second-grade teacher Stephanie Shermer, the morning routine provides a quiet start to the day and encourages reading.

Hardy says the breakfast doesn't even interfere with last-minute planning, as she feared, and her room stays clean. "This is a great program," she says. "I wouldn't go back." ✔

—Karen Pertschuk
NEA Health Information Network

WANT TO LEARN MORE?

- **Visit the NEA Health Information Network website at www.neahin.org.**
- **Contact the Food Research and Action Center for their School Breakfast Score Card at www.frac.org or 202/986-2200.**
- **Contact the American School Food Service Association at www.asfsa.org.**

What's Up at HIN?

NEA Health Information Network

■ A NEW LOOK

NEA HIN's mission has always been to improve health, safety, and student achievement in public schools. The network does this by providing school employees with vital, effective, and timely health information through parent, community, public, and private partnerships. To give you more and better information, NEA HIN redesigned its website, www.neahin.org, to be more user-friendly and provide a wealth of new health information just for NEA members. Use the search engine to look up various health topics, or explore the site by clicking on programmatic links. Enter your e-mail address to receive a monthly electronic newsletter with updates on HIN programs and activities, upcoming conferences and events, and useful resources. Visit www.neahin.org today!

■ 'SEPTEMBER 11 REMEMBERED'

To mark the first anniversary of the September 11 tragedy and help members and students cope and heal, NEA and NEA HIN have developed a special "September 11 Remembered" website. Here, teachers, parents, and students can discover ideas, lesson plans, discussion points, and related information to help in sharing and learning from this tragedy. Learn more in the In Focus section, page 22. Then visit www.neahin.org/september11.

■ MAKING SCHOOL EVEN SAFER

It's true: Gun violence is a problem in our schools. Yet schools continue to be the safest place for kids. Still, the fact remains: Nine children die from gun violence every day. Because schools can play a leading role in creating safer communities, NEA and NEA HIN are initiating a new project to combat gun crime in our schools and communities. The issue is safety, not gun control. NEA supports sensible legislation that respects the rights of lawful gun owners, while preventing guns from falling into the wrong hands. For more information, visit www.neahin.org/gunsafety.

NEA HIN

Get Ready, Get Set, Move!

Mike Quon

The start of school can be one of the most stressful times of the year, but health experts say it's actually the perfect time to think about how to consciously make movement—vigorous, pleasurable movement—a natural part of each day. No fuss, no muss. Just fun.

Research has confirmed it over and again: You can't go wrong by getting out and shaking a leg. It could save your life—and that's not just hype.

Studies show that inactivity actually poses a greater risk for death than some of the more widely feared diseases like diabetes, heart disease, and smoking. So huge is the benefit of physical activity, say researchers at the Dallas-based Cooper Institute, that a normal-weight person who's a couch potato has twice the mortality rate of somebody who's fat, but moderately fit.

"Physical inactivity actually increases a person's risk for death from all causes," says Heather Chambliss, Ph.D., a researcher at the Cooper Institute. "But it's something we can easily fix."

How? Get up and move!

"There's really no reason *not* to be moving," says Peg Jordan, a registered nurse and noted fitness expert with the Aerobics and Fitness Association of America. "It helps relieve chronic stress and tension, helps you unwind, stretches your muscles, and removes the toxins that come with fatigue and anxiousness." Studies show that it also significantly reduces depression, increases our sense of well-being, improves sleep, and even boosts our brain power and memory.

If that doesn't convince you to get going, consider this: You don't have to slug huffing and puffing through a five-mile jog three times a week for a payoff. Research confirms that short, 10-minute bursts of activity throughout the day can render as many rewards. Walking briskly, playing tag with kids, dancing a jig, whacking weeds—anything that quickens your pulse, gives you a flush of heat and energy, and makes you feel "a bit dewy," says Jordan, can do wonders if you do it regularly, and mindfully.

"I like to think of it as joyful movement," explains Jordan, who's also a medical anthropologist and author of *The Fitness Instinct* (Rodale, 1999). "It's really about doing the things you love that inspire you—things that aren't necessarily the same old 'go to the gym' activities."

The key, she says, is to move at moderate intensity, using your muscles a bit more than you ordinarily would, for a total of at least 30 minutes a day—minutes you can "gather as you go." If you're severely overweight with health problems, Jordan says, it's advisable to check with a doctor and join a supervised exercise class to build good habits. But even then, she adds, you should do something that's fun, not drudgery.

"I like to tell teachers to practice some of the same principles on themselves as they do their new students. Keep tailoring your fitness activities to suit your unique self. Apply a take charge attitude to discover what makes you happy." At school, for instance, be creative; play hula hoop or dance with your students. Stretch every chance you get. Play ball. Make a game of going up and down stairs, skipping some when you can.

Once home, says Jordan, don't stop at the mirror to curse your body and lament what's not. Rather, use the time to make a peaceful transition from school. "Replace negative body talk with daily life-enhancing movements," she urges.

"Changing behavior is the first step to true wellness."✔

—Marilyn Milloy

TALK TO US

This is the first in a series of articles designed to help NEA members tackle stress and develop habits that will lead to better health. If you have a concern, comment, or question, or just want to share a good habit, please e-mail mmilloy@nea.org.

Ready To Move?

Try these activities to get your heart juices going. Be mindful of using your muscles a bit harder than normal. And remember: Just 30 minutes a day—10 minutes, three times!

- **work in the garden**
- **do yoga**
- **dance (belly, jazz, salsa, swing)**
- **move to music**
- **jump on a mini-trampoline**
- **hit golf balls at a driving range**
- **build a sand castle**
- **hike a nature trail**
- **skate**
- **train a pet**
- **crawl around on all fours (and not necessarily with a toddler!)**
- **clean the house**
- **wash the car**
- **bicycle pretty streets**
- **take a city walking tour**
- **jump rope**

HEALTHY BITES

BROWN BAGGIN' IT

Try an easy and refreshing lunch with two traditional Middle Eastern staples—hummus and baba gannouj. Made from chickpeas (garbanzo beans), sesame seeds, lemon, and garlic, they pack a wallop of protein and will help keep you energized all afternoon. Tip: Use for a dip with pita pocket bread cut up in triangles, or with baby carrot sticks, red and yellow pepper slices, or plum tomatoes. Or make a sandwich by stuffing the pocket bread with hummus or baba gannouj and vegetables. Finish off with orange slices, and you'll be well on your way to getting in your "five-a-day" servings of fruits or vegetables.

GET INSPIRED

"When it's hard to get motivated to work out, I focus on how I know I'll feel after I'm done. I'm always glad I exercise, so rather than grumble about not having time, I smile about how I will feel in 30 minutes or so, and start moving!"

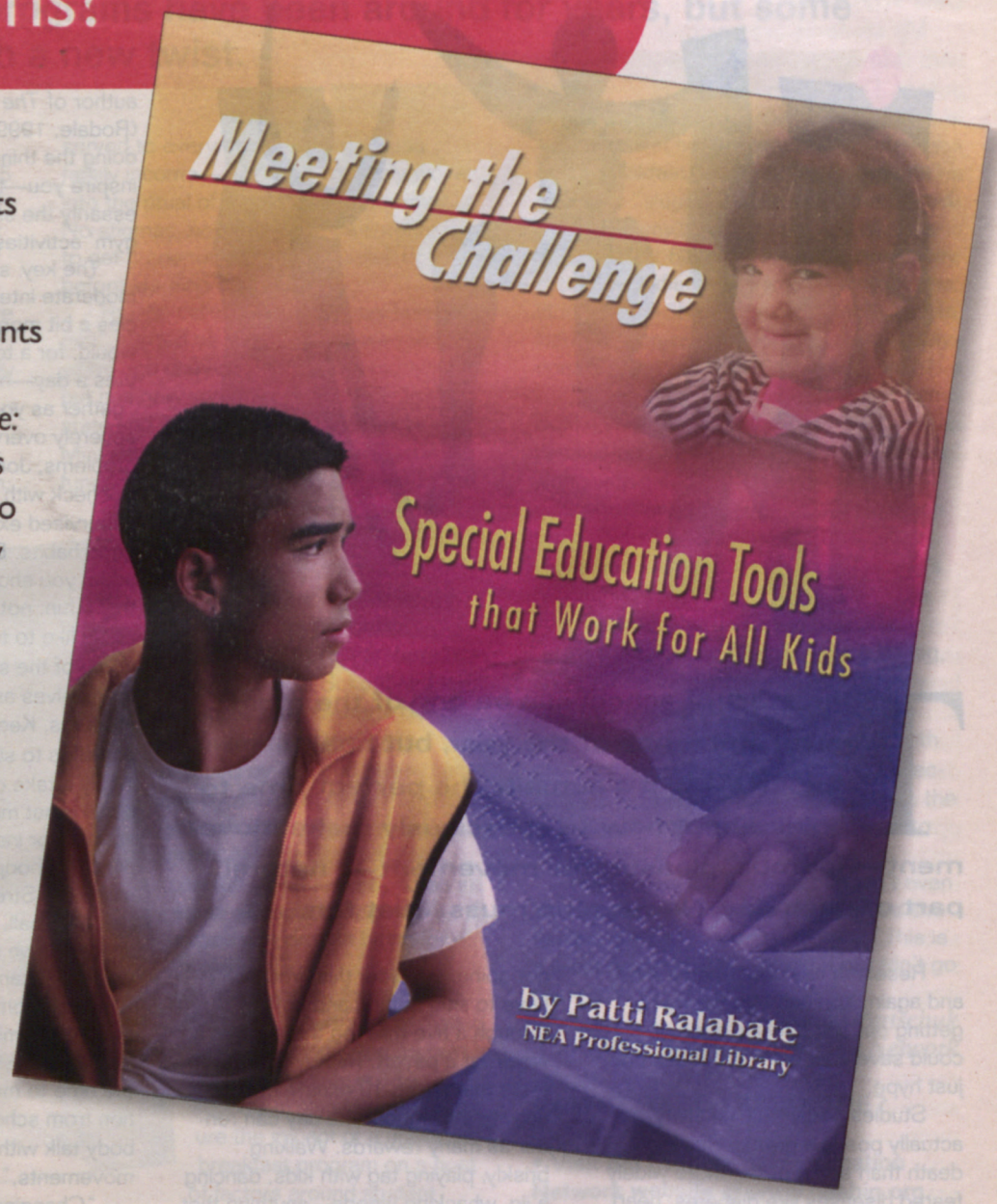
—Sameta Rush, a fifth-grade teacher at Strawberry Park Elementary School in Steamboat Springs, Colorado

GOOD QUESTION!

Q: I haven't exercised in years. What can I do to keep from getting sore when I start?

A: Sue Stanley-Green of the National Athletic Trainers' Association says it's important to first see a doctor who can screen and treat any potential medical problems. Then start working out in moderation. If you're walking, for example, cover short distances, then increase the distance and speed as your body adapts. If you're using weights, start with light weights, then build up. Also make sure you warm up and stretch before and after you work out—that's critical.

Are you "meeting the challenges" of today's classrooms?



Classrooms today are full of students with various skill levels and special needs. To be an effective teacher, you need effective strategies to help students struggling to overcome academic or behavioral difficulties. *Meeting the Challenge: Special Education Tools that Work for All Kids* provides specialized resources designed to help you meet the individual needs of any student. This valuable toolkit addresses six critical areas:

- ✓ **Evaluating struggling students using classroom-based assessments.**
- ✓ **Observing behavior and positively addressing behavioral challenges.**
- ✓ **Using a collaborative team process.**
- ✓ **Developing educationally relevant student expectations.**
- ✓ **Providing accommodations and modifications.**
- ✓ **Communicating effectively with parents.**

This book is filled with useful ideas and practical, timesaving strategies, along with sample worksheets and other perforated forms to copy and use "as is" or modify for your own use. Whether you're a general education teacher or a special educator, you'll find tools you can use every day.

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National Teacher of the Year

The moment he stepped into the classroom, **Chauncey Veatch** fell in love with his students. He admits he had a few concerns, but he never questioned his decision to teach.

Now Veatch hopes he can share his love of teaching with his peers as he tours the country as the 2002 National Teacher of the Year.

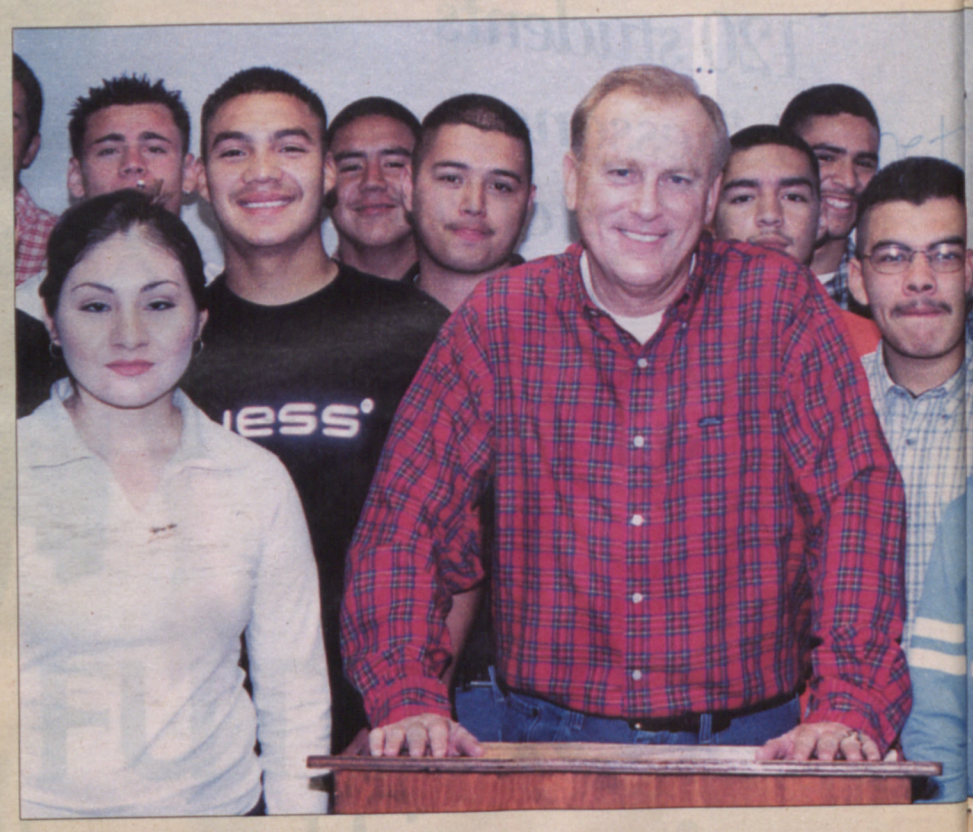
"I never thought I would get it," Veatch says of the award. "But maybe the the rewards I receive from teaching are something I can share."

Veatch decided in 1995 to become a teacher, after serving 22 years in the U.S. Army. He sought advice from his brother and sister, both teachers at the time, then contacted a school district near his home in California about working as a substitute teacher. The school system convinced him to interview for a full-time position. Six days later, he started teaching.

During the next three years, Veatch taught middle school during the day and pursued his teaching credential at night and on weekends. In 1999, Veatch assumed his current position as a social studies teacher at Coachella Valley High School in Thermal, California.

Veatch spends much of his free time with his students, attending their sporting events and family celebrations. Of the 34 seniors he taught last year, 17 said they wanted to become teachers.

"Our students are watching us every day, and if they see that we love what we're doing, of course it will be an appealing career," he says. ✔



Preserving the Past In Pewter

John Whitehead

Modern conveniences have their place, but NEA-Retired member **Dick Graver** helps preserve the past as one of a half-dozen master pewterers in the United States.

"I certainly enjoyed teaching, but this is a bit more therapeutic and relaxing," says Graver, who taught industrial arts and technical education courses for 32 years until his retirement in 1997.

The Pennsylvania member developed his interest in pewter while pursuing his master's degree at Millersville University in the 1970s, when he studied under renowned metalware expert Henry J. Kauffman. He now specializes in 18th- and 19th-century reproductions of such items as plates, teapots, candlesticks, mugs, and utensils.

Graver uses traditional methods to create his pieces—casting them in metal molds; skimming, burnishing, and spinning on a lathe; soldering parts together; and polishing.

"It looks relatively easy, but you really have to get the feel of the metal," says Graver. "There isn't a whole lot written on the subject, so you just learn by experience." ✔

Jeff Schultz

Teacher on the Trail

More than 5,000 schools worldwide follow the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race on the Web each year. But NEA member Kim Kavanagh, a second-grade teacher in Ellisville, Missouri, experienced the 2002 race in person.

As the Iditarod's Teacher on the Trail, Kavanagh (shown here with one of the race participants) spent a month traveling by plane along the 1,112-mile race through the rugged terrain of Alaska. During her trip, she visited various checkpoints along the trail, interviewed mushers, and helped out wherever she could. She posted pictures, journals, and lesson plans daily on the Web so students and teachers at her home school, Ridge Meadows Elementary, could follow her journey.

Kavanagh communicated with her class daily through e-mail and even conducted a video teleconference so she could speak to students individually. Kavanagh was fortunate enough to have computer access at all of the checkpoints.

"This was such a great way to combine adventure and learning," Kavanagh says. "I missed the kids terribly, but this was a way for them to be included in what I was doing, even if it wasn't directly."

For more information, go to www.iditarod.com. ✔

Rick Peoples

Teaching from Center Stage

NEA Student Progam member **William Mack** always knew theater could entertain people. After he joined the theater department at the University of Kentucky, Mack learned that theater could educate them as well.

Mack (shown here on left) belongs to the cast of *Afrilachia*, a play based on a book of poems by Frank X. Walker. The show's 13 cast members explore various race issues of the Appalachian region by interpreting Walker's poems through drama, dance, and song.

Mack, a senior, joined the cast because he "believed in the message, the focus they had, and the fact that they were trying to raise cultural awareness," he says.

The troupe first performed the play two years ago as part of a program celebrating 50 years of integration on the university's campus. After a season of campus performances, the cast toured the state for a year performing the show. They plan to launch a sequel this fall.

"After I finished *Afrilachia* I knew I wanted to pursue the dramatic arts," says Mack, who changed his major to fine arts education. "This opened my eyes on how to make theater entertaining and educating at the same time."

For more information about the Student Program, go to www.nea.org/students/. ✔

Nick Tomecek

National ESP of the Year

Bryan Kelsen

Don't tell Colorado's **JoAnn Falk** she can't do something, because she'll prove you're wrong.

During her 27-year career, Falk organized a local Association, won bargaining recognition from her school board, created a district education foundation, and even painted murals in the schools. Her efforts have not gone unnoticed. This spring, NEA recognized Falk with the 2002 Education Support Professional of the Year Award.

"To me that is the top prize you can get for support professionals," says Falk, a central office secretary from Pueblo. "It means a lot to me and my Association."

In 1994, Falk and her colleagues belonged to the Colorado Classified Employees Association, but the union did not have bargaining rights. So Falk organized the Association of Classified Employees and approached the Colorado Education Association about the local's desire for bargaining recognition. In the end, she and 13 colleagues switched their memberships to CEA. With CEA support, members of ACE fought for school board recognition, but the district superintendent blocked their efforts.

That didn't stop Falk. The local organized an election campaign for two school board candidates sympathetic to the local's cause. The candidates won the election and the new school board recognized ACE at the board's first meeting. Within six months the system had a new superintendent. Contract negotiations also began that year.

"In my eyes the classified people were so abused under the previous superintendent that they had no one to stand up for them," says Falk, ACE president. "I help organize throughout Colorado and I always tell them, 'don't think it can't be done. If you think it can be done, it can.'" ✔

GOT A TIP?

Do you have an interesting story idea? Contact Kristen Loschert, section editor, at kloschert@nea.org.

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Look Before You Leap

Q: I have worked in public schools for 26 years. I want to continue to work, but in a less stressful job, which means lower income. Does salary amount really matter when retiring or is years of service the most important thing to consider?

A: The amount of salary definitely matters. You need to check with the human resources department in your school district to get the pension formula for your plan, but taking a lower salary could be a mistake.

Here's why. Pensions are usually determined by taking a percentage of the final salary times the years of service. To use a simple example, let's say the formula is 3 percent of your final salary times years of service. Let's assume you make $50,000. Three percent of $50,000 is $1,500. If you retire now with 26 years of service, that would give you a pension of $39,000 ($1,500 times your 26 years). If you take a job within the district at $40,000 and retire four years from now, 3 percent of your final salary would be $1,200. Multiply that times 30 years of service and your pension is $36,000. So you are actually penalized for working longer.

If your plan is similar to what I've outlined, you might be better off retiring with the higher pension and getting a less stressful job somewhere else (assuming there's no bonus for completing 30 years of service). Benefit plans vary greatly, so get the formula for your district and do the math before deciding. Money's not the most important factor—your quality of life over the next few working years is critical. But you should have all the information before making a decision.

Q: How did you open an IRA for your 15-year-old daughter? I was told that my son must be 18.

A: I was told the same thing at our local bank, but I argued about it and insisted that the bank employee research the rules. She made a few calls and ended up opening the IRA account.

I've found that most well-informed consumers know more than the employees of the average financial services institution about matters like this, so don't give up.

But, I didn't succeed in opening a checking account for my daughter's 16th birthday. I want my daughter to learn how to budget her money and use an ATM card before she goes to college and has too much independence tossed at her all at once. But the bank refused on this one. They said that someone under 18 is not fiscally responsible.

Q: We want to open an IRA for our 19-year-old daughter. How do we decide between a Roth and a regular?

A: I opened a Roth for my daughter. The earnings on a regular IRA are taxed when they are withdrawn, while the earnings on a Roth are never taxed.

That seems a big advantage to a young person who has such a long time to let the money grow. The advantage to a regular IRA is that you can deduct the contribution from taxes. But my daughter's income is so low that she already is in the lowest tax bracket.

Q: I am 55 and recently divorced. I refinanced my house at 8 percent so my husband could get his share of the equity, and he received half of my retirement benefits. Can I refinance at a lower rate and put the savings back into my retirement account?

A: I think you could get a better rate on your loan because interest rates are low now. But I'm less certain of your ability to pump that extra money back into your retirement plan.

Plans have specific rules on contributions. Some, like 403(b) plans, have catch-up provisions. It's worth checking out. Even if you can't put it into your plan, the refinancing could still make sense for you if you plan to stay in the home for a while. You could put the monthly mortgage savings in another account.

Mary Rowland is an author and contributor to several financial planning magazines. E-mail your personal finance questions to MoneyQuestions@neamb.com.

Thrifty Educator

This month's tips come from Bonnie McMoran, an EJHS English and Reading Teacher from Boise, Idaho, and Arietha Lockhart, a music specialist at Medlock Elementary School in Decatur, Georgia.

McMoran: I found a great use for electrical tape available at any home improvement center.

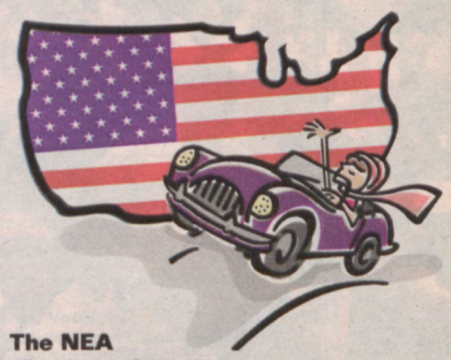
Use electrical tape to make lines or grids on a white or chalk board. They come in a variety of colors, are inexpensive ($2 for a set of colors), and won't stick permanently to the board.

I use the tape in my classroom to set up an agenda using a 4 x 6 grid for each subject and each day of the week. I set up the agenda like it is in the student's agenda so they aren't confused when they write the information down. The grid is a great visual tool for students, the teacher, and substitutes.

Lockhart: I'm a music educator, and for my elementary students, learning to keep a steady beat is an important skill. To help them, I give each student bottle drums—recycled 64-ounce plastic juice jugs. We do a lot of large group responses as well as echoing individual students. It would cost hundreds of dollars to purchase drums for the entire class, but students can recycle at home and the beat can go on and on and on...

Got an idea?

If you have a suggestion for how your colleagues can save money at school, send it along to neatoday@nea.org.



The NEA Members Auto & Home Insurance Program has been launched nationwide and is now available in 27 states.

Heads Up from NEA Member Benefits

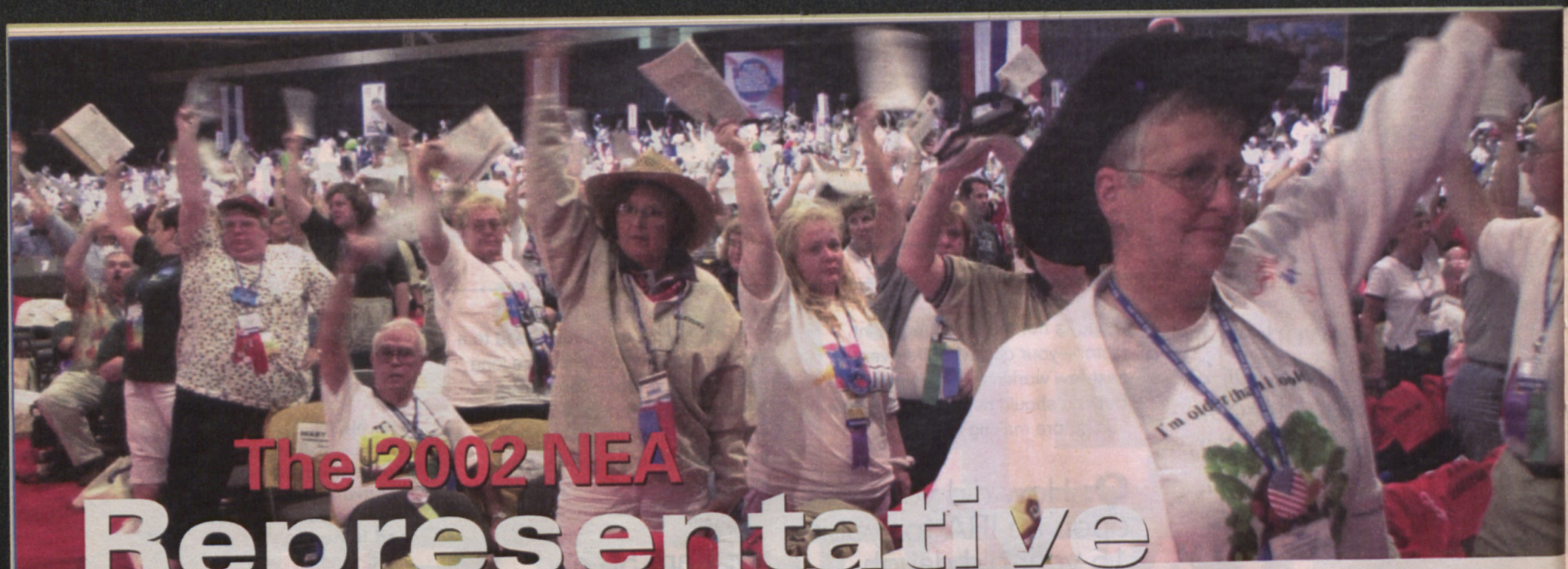
Statistics show that educators have better than average driving records, meaning fewer accidents and claims. That's why NEA Member Benefits can offer NEA members fantastic rates through the NEA Members Auto & Home Insurance Program™, underwritten by California Casualty. For over 50 years, California Casualty has provided educators with auto and home insurance programs to meet their needs.

The auto insurance portion of the program features various types of coverage, including motorcycle and boat coverage for NEA members. A few of the unique educator benefits are: convenient payment plans with summer skip options, a collision deductible waived for accidents involving other NEA Members Auto & Home Insurance Program policyholders, and up to $250 coverage for any kind of personal property stolen from a vehicle.

The home insurance portion of the program provides specialty coverage for vacation homes, rental homes, and permanent residences. Unique homeowner policy options include coverage up to $500 for fundraising money lost or stolen on school premises, up to $2,500 for a computer used in educator business stolen at or away from home, and educator excess liability coverage provided at no additional cost.

Already available in half of the states, this exciting program will be available to all NEA members nationwide over the next few years.

For more information, see the "Are we there yet?" ad on page 6, or visit the NEA Member Benefits website at www.neamb.com.



The 2002 NEA Representative Assembly

Delegates show ESEA the money.

Delegates to the NEA Representative Assembly (RA) voted to set aside $4 million to expand awareness, help shape implementation, and advocate for improvements in the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the far-reaching law enacted last January.

The nearly 9,000 delegates approved the creation of an advisory committee to gather input and develop strategies for making sure ESEA improves opportunities for children and public education. NEA will also advocate for resources at the local, state, and federal levels to enhance the qualifications of teachers and education support professionals, hold all students to high expectations, and provide meaningful help to schools in need of improvement.

Delegates also elected new officers who will take office September 1. Reg Weaver, a middle school science teacher from Harvey, Illinois, was elected NEA president. Dennis Van Roekel, a high school math teacher from Paradise Valley, Arizona, was elected NEA vice president. Weaver and Van Roekel were each elected to three-year terms. Lily Eskelsen, an elementary teacher from Salt Lake City, Utah, was elected secretary-treasurer for one year, the time remaining in Van Roekel's term.

In addition, delegates elected two members of the NEA Executive Committee. Mike Billirakis, a 30-year teacher from Pickering, Ohio, and Marsha Smith, a third-generation educator from Olney, Maryland, were each elected to three-year terms.

Delegates heard from a number of inspirational leaders, including Bob Chase as he presided over his last RA as NEA president.

"Politicians talk boldly about holding teachers accountable," said Chase. "That's fine. But we have a professional responsibility to hold the politicians accountable. It is morally wrong to say to teachers in high-poverty schools that 'you are to blame.' It is morally wrong to threaten children of poverty with high-stakes tests if you are going to deny them high-quality teachers and schools."

Other speakers included Chauncey Veatch, the National Teacher of the Year from Coachella Valley High School in Thermal, California, who uplifted delegates on the Fourth of July with his account of the importance of public education in a democratic society; Sandra McBrayer, executive director of the Children's Initiative in California and a former Teacher of the Year; and JoAnn Falk, school secretary from Pueblo, Colorado, and National Education Support Professional of the Year.

In his first opportunity to set the tone for the direction of NEA in the years to come, President-elect Weaver gave a speech emphasizing the organization's energy and commitment.

"We must work within an environment that recognizes that we are one in the fight for a quality education for all students," Weaver said. "It's an environment where we can disagree, but not disengage, an environment where NEA and its state affiliates do what is best for children and public education."

Delegates also adopted new guidelines for quality distance learning programs. The guidelines were developed as the result of a yearlong review of distance learning standards and practices. The new policy emphasizes the importance of teacher quality and ensures that technology is used as a tool in effective instruction, not as a mechanism for replacing face-to-face interaction with teachers.

Delegates also made changes in the Legislative Program by adopting provisions to strengthen support for early childhood education programs, collective bargaining rights for higher education faculty, and nondiscrimination in employment.

Amendments to NEA's Resolutions related to standardized testing of students. The changes clarified that standardized tests and assessments should be used only to improve the quality of instruction. The RA also adopted new language clarifying NEA's views that charter schools should be laboratory schools, not separate and apart from other public schools, and that charter schools should have the same standards of access and accountability as other public schools.

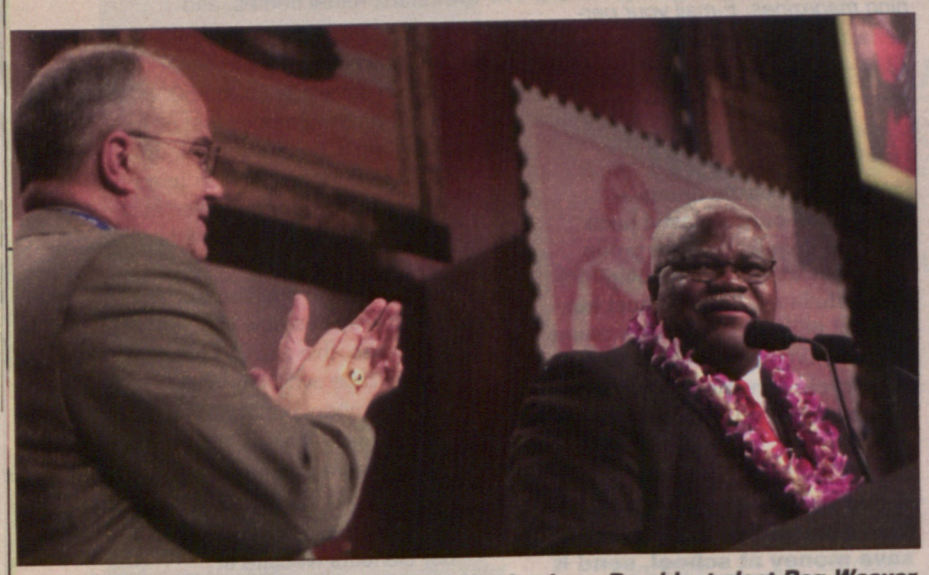
The most significant new business items related to NEA's efforts to influence the implementation—and possible revisions—of ESEA.

Delegates voted to provide resources, establish strategies and programs, and provide assistance and guidance to state and local affiliates to ensure that the new federal law helps, not hinders, the work of teachers and education support professionals.

Delegates debated and voted on new business items in Dallas.

In addition, delegates voted to support efforts to expand access and enhance the quality of early childhood education and to take steps to organize early childhood education providers to improve their skills and compensation.

Ending the RA on a high note, delegates broke the record for voluntary contributions to the Fund for Children and Public Education, raising more than $1.1 million, which will support efforts to elect candidates who support education in the 2002 elections.



Outgoing President Bob Chase applauds as President-elect Reg Weaver shares his vision for NEA.

This listing does not include those resolutions that were adopted with editorial amendments.

List of Resolutions

A. Serve as the National Voice for Education

A-4. Parental Involvement

The National Education Association believes that a community engaged in the life of its public schools is paramount to the future of public education. The Association also believes that a strong partnership must be formed among parents/guardians, schools, the Association, and the community to address the mutual interests of the entire community.

The Association further believes that parents/guardians who are active participants in the education of their children increase the likelihood of the achievement of educational excellence. Parents/guardians, teachers, other education employees, school board members, and the community must set high expectations for student behavior and academic success and provide the encouragement and support for each student to achieve his or her full potential.

The Association believes that innovative programs should be developed and resources committed to promote and increase family and community involvement in public schools and to promote and increase the involvement of education employees in the community. The Association encourages its affiliates to work collaboratively with the community in establishing such programs and finding the resources necessary to make the programs successful.

The Association also believes that parents/guardians should be encouraged to visit their children's schools and communicate with their children's teachers and other education employees with whom the children have daily contact. The Association further believes that parents/guardians, students, community members, teachers, other education employees, and school board members should promote the successes of the collaboration between the school and the community.

A-10. School Boards

The National Education Association believes that it is the responsibility of school boards to provide a quality education to each student within a school district. The Association also believes that school boards must provide resources and support so that each school in a district meets standards for educational excellence. The Association further believes that school boards must promote public understanding of the importance of public education and the schools and programs within their school districts.

The Association believes that the composition of school boards must be representative of the population within the school district, including minority groups; that board members must be elected by the voters in the school district; and that board members must be elected from representative districts. The Association opposes state and mayoral takeovers of school districts. The Association also believes that provisions should be made for parents/guardians of students who are attending school in a district other than their home district as part of a court-ordered interdistrict busing plan to have substantive influence on board actions and policies.

The Association further believes that student participation in a school board's deliberative process should be encouraged; however, student input in the voting process should be advisory only. Wherever a school board includes student members, the Association believes that the student members should be excluded from participating in discussions, receiving information, and voting on issues dealing with education employees and items contained in negotiated agreements.

The Association also believes that school board meetings must be held at times and places that allow education employees, local affiliates, and the community to participate in educational decision making.

A-18. Financial Crisis

The National Education Association believes that free public education is in a financial crisis. The Association seeks to maintain and expand educational programs for students by seeking adequate and equitable public and legislative financial support. The Association also believes that quality education requires adequate personnel, teaching materials, and supplies as priorities to be considered in the event of financial crisis.

The Association opposes the establishment of ad hoc classrooms in the event of school closures.

A-30. Charter Schools and other Nontraditional Public School Options

The National Education Association supports innovation in public education. The Association believes that charter schools and other nontraditional public school options have the potential to facilitate reforms, such as decentralized and shared decision making, diversity in educational offerings, and the removal of onerous administrative requirements. By developing new and creative methods of teaching and learning that can be replicated in mainstream public schools, these schools may be agents for positive change. The Association also believes that, when concepts such as charter schools and other nontraditional school options are proposed, affected public education employees should be directly involved in the design, implementation, and governance of these programs.

The Association further believes that plans should not negatively impact the regular public school program and must include adequate safeguards covering contract and employment provisions for all employees, voluntary participation, health and safety standards for all students and employees, nondiscrimination and equal educational opportunity, staffing by licensed education professionals, and financial responsibility.

The Association believes that programs must be adequately funded, must comply with all state laws applicable to regular public schools, must include start-up resources, must not divert current funds from the regular public school programs, and must contain appropriate procedures for regular periodic assessment and evaluation, as well as adequate attendance and record keeping procedures.

The granting of charters should be consistent with the following principles:

a. Charter schools should serve as a laboratory for field-testing curricular and instructional innovations and/or to provide educational opportunities for students who cannot adequately be served in mainstream public schools.

b. Charter school programs must be qualitatively different from what is available in mainstream public schools and not just an avenue for parental choice.

c. Local school boards should be the only entity that can grant or renew charter applications.

d. Appeals of local school board decisions in charter applications should be made to a state education agency but appeals should be heard only on the grounds of arbitrary, capricious, or unreasonable decision making, not on the educational judgment of the local school board.

e. Private, for-profit entities should not be eligible to receive a charter.

f. Charter schools should have a limited right to contract with for-profit entities for services only to the extent that mainstream public schools can do so.

g. Charters should not be granted for the purpose of home schooling, including providing services over the Internet to home-schooled students.

h. Charter schools should be nonsectarian in nature. Particular care should be exercised in granting charters to any religious institutions.

i. Private schools should not be able to convert to charter school status. If state law allows such conversions, the chartering agency should ensure that the converted school is significantly different in student body, governance, and education program than its predecessor. This assurance should be especially vigorous in the case of schools with prior religious affiliation.

j. Charters should be granted for a limited period with five years being the norm.

k. Charter schools should be monitored on a continuing basis and the charter should be subject to modification or revocation at any time if the children's or the public's interest is at stake.

l. Charters should not be granted unless the chartering agency is satisfied that adequate startup resources will be available.

Charter schools should be designed and operated in accordance with the following principles:

a. Charter schools may be freed from some of the requirements of law dealing with curriculum, instruction, staffing, budget, internal organization, calendar, and schedule.

b. Charter schools should be required to meet the same requirements as mainstream public schools with regard to health and safety, public records and meetings, licensure/certification of teachers and other employees, finance and auditing, student assessment, civil rights, and labor relations.

c. Teachers and education support professionals should be considered public employees.

d. Teachers and education support professionals should have the same constitutional and statutory rights as other public employees.

e. Charter schools should be subject to the same public sector labor relations laws as mainstream public schools and charter school employees should have the same collective bargaining rights under law and local practice as their counterparts in mainstream public schools.

f. Students should not be charged tuition or required to pay a fee to attend a charter school.

g. Students should not be involuntarily assigned to attend a charter school.

h. Charter schools should have some discretion in selecting or rejecting students if they are designed to serve a targeted student population. Students shall not be screened on the basis of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation/gender identification, English-language proficiency, family income, athletic ability, special needs, parental involvement in school affairs, intellectual potential, academic achievement, or cost of educating the student. Indirect screening such as denying admission because of the cost of transportation of a student shall not be permitted.

i. Employment in a charter school should be voluntary. Employees in conversion charter schools should be afforded an opportunity to transfer to a comparable position at another mainstream public school.

j. Charter schools should not disproportionately divert resources from mainstream public schools. Charter schools should receive the same amount of money as a comparable mix of students in a mainstream public school. Adequate funds must be available for capital expenditures such as buildings and equipment that do not come from the operating budget of the charter school or the host district.

A-36. U.S. Federal Schools

The National Education Association believes that all federal schools, except those under the control of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, should come under the auspices of the U.S. Department of Education.

The Association also believes that all dependents of U.S. government employees in Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) schools should be afforded the opportunity to attend such schools and is unalterably opposed to any attempt by Congress to privatize any of these federal schools.

B. Advance the Cause of Education for All Individuals

B-15. Equal Opportunities Through Mathematics and Science Education

The National Education Association believes that mathematics and science education provide women and minorities access to equal opportunities and equitable treatment for employment in mathematics and science-related careers.

The Association supports the development and maintenance of gender-free and culturally unbiased mathematics and science programs. The Association encourages the recruitment of females and minorities to enroll and participate actively in mathematics and science courses and/or to become professionals in those fields.

B-19. Equity for Incarcerated Persons

The National Education Association believes that incarcerated persons, regardless of gender or age, are entitled to equal access to educational, recreational, and rehabilitative programs within all correctional systems.

B-22. Educational Programs for English-Language Learners

The National Education Association believes that English Language Learners (ELL) must have available to them programs that address their unique needs and that provide equal opportunity to all students, regardless of their primary language. Programs for ELL students should emphasize English proficiency while concurrently providing meaningful instruction in all other curriculum areas.

The Association also believes that ELL students should be placed in bilingual education programs to receive instruction in their native language from qualified teachers until such time as English proficiency is achieved. If no bilingual programs are available, these students should be taught in English-as-a-second-language (ESL) programs designed to meet their specific needs. These students should be in classes that are limited in size; use methods such as weighted formulas; and provide additional staffing, modified scheduling, and/or curriculum design to accommodate the demands of each ELL student. Students should not be enrolled in special education classes solely because of linguistic differences.

The Association further believes that model bilingual education programs, in which language minority students demonstrate an increase in English language acquisition and academic achievement throughout the grade levels, should be promoted and supported at the federal, state, and local levels. Further, the Association advocates full funding of all instructional materials, resources, and programs for ELL students as well as professional development programs for education employees who work with these students. The school district or other appropriate agency should provide released time for the training of teachers who instruct ELL students.

Educators, through a bargaining or other bilateral decision-making process, must be fully involved in the development and implementation of programs serving these students, including the assignment of teachers and the terms and conditions of their employment. Teachers should be compensated at the teacher's hourly rate of pay for any additional time spent in training. They should also be reimbursed for the cost of tuition, textbooks, and travel incurred in such training.

The Association values bilingual and multilingual competence and supports programs that assist individuals in attaining and maintaining proficiency in their native language before and after they acquire proficiency in English.

B-26. Homebound Instruction

The National Education Association believes that homebound students, those educated in the home because of individualized student needs determined by established local school procedures, must receive instruction that follows the regular curriculum. This instruction must be implemented, documented, monitored, and assessed by a licensed teacher. The Association also believes that credits earned through such homebound instruction should be accepted toward promotion and/or graduation requirements.

B-35. Vocational, Career, and Technical Education

The National Education Association believes that preparation of students for vocational, career, and technical jobs should be the responsibility of secondary and higher education in collaboration with labor and business. Educational programs that assure equal opportunity for occupational development and encourage students to consider nontraditional vocations should be developed for all students at all levels. Vocational, career, and technical education should provide a comprehensive program of lifelong learning for the training, advancement, and promotion of all students.

The Association supports vocational, career, and technical education as a major component of education and advocates that every student have the opportunity to enroll in such classes without restrictions. To be effective, vocational, career, and technical education should be preceded by career awareness and exploration programs. These vocational, career, and technical education courses should be coordinated and integrated with traditionally academic courses. These integrated programs should be combined, when appropriate, with cooperative efforts on the part of educators and industrial and business leaders to provide school-to-work experiences for students. Organized vocational, career, and technical education programs offer a sequence of courses that are directly related to the preparation of individuals in paid or unpaid employment in current and emerging occupations. Such programs shall include competency-based applied learning that contributes to an individual's academic knowledge, higher-order reasoning and problem-solving skills, work attitudes, interpersonal and collaborative skills, general employability skills, and the occupational-specific skills necessary for economic independence as a productive and contributing member of society.

The Association also believes that adequate resources must be provided for educators to maintain, enhance, and expand quality vocational, career, and technical education programs, to procure up-to-date equipment and materials for those programs, and to prepare students for a highly technical work environment. The Association further believes that the involvement of education employees, private sector employment and training program personnel, and the labor and business communities is essential to the development of quality vocational, career, and technical education programs.

B-36. Vocational, Career, and Technical Student Organizations

The National Education Association believes that vocational, career, and technical student organizations are an integral component of a quality vocational, career, and technical education program. Vocational, career, and technical student organizations provide opportunities for leadership development, career preparation, and community involvement for secondary school students. Active participation in a vocational, career, and technical student organization at the local, state, and national levels encourages young men and women to become better prepared for the multiple adult roles of wage earner, community leader, and family member.

B-37. Fine Arts Education

The National Education Association believes that artistic expression is basic to an individual's intellectual, aesthetic, and emotional development. The Association also believes that fine arts transcend cultural barriers, foster multicultural understanding, and enhance critical thinking skills. The Association therefore believes that every pre-K through 12 curriculum must include a balanced, comprehensive, and sequential program of fine arts instruction for all students taught by a licensed specialist in a facility or room designed and equipped for that purpose. Resources must be provided to maintain and upgrade materials and provide for emerging technologies.

The Association urges its state affiliates to become involved in the promotion, expansion, and implementation of an academic fine arts program in curricula.

B-57. Standardized Testing of Students

The National Education Association believes that standardized tests and/or assessments should be used only to improve the quality of education and instruction for students. Standardized tests are most useful when designed by the educational professionals closest to the classroom and integrated with assessment information specific to local programs. Affiliates should advocate for, and states must design and use, a variety of developmentally appropriate assessment techniques that allow necessary accommodations, modifications, and exemptions and are bias-free, reliable, and valid. When a test and/or assessment is mandated at the local, state, or national level, it should be reviewed by a panel of appropriate subject area specialists and teachers to ascertain the relevance of the test to the subject area and be used only to evaluate a program's effectiveness toward meeting local, state, or national standards and/or goals.

The Association also believes that, in order for standardized achievement tests and/or assessments to support quality education—

a. Content standards must be prioritized to support effective curriculum, instruction, professional development, and assessment.

b. Stakeholders must determine high priority content standards. These standards must be clearly and thoroughly described so that the knowledge and skills students need to demonstrate are evident.

c. Valid results of assessment of high-priority content standards must be reported standard-by-standard for each student, school, and district.

d. The breadth of the curriculum must be monitored to ensure that attention is given to all content standards and subject areas including those that are not assessed.

e. Progress should be continually monitored to ensure that assessments are appropriate for the purposes for which they are intended.

The Association opposes the use of standardized tests and/or assessments when—

a. Used as the criterion for the reduction or withholding of any educational funding

b. Results are used to compare students, teachers, programs, schools, communities, and states

c. Used as a single criterion for high-stakes decision making

d. The results lead to sanctions or other punitive actions

e. Arbitrary standards are required

f. They do not match the motor skills and/or academic developmental levels or language proficiency of the student

g. Student scores are used to evaluate teachers or to determine compensation or employment status

h. Programs are specifically designed to teach to the test

i. Testing programs or tests limit or supplant instructional time

j. Every student is required to be tested every year

k. Students and parents/guardians are not provided with a complete report of the individual student's test results

l. Time required to administer the test exceeds reasonable and appropriate limits for the age of the student.

The administration of a standardized test and/or assessment includes the responsibility to educate the stakeholders about the purpose of the test, the meaning of the test results, and the accurate interpretation of its conclusions. The Association further believes that students, parents/guardians, teachers, administrators, schools, and school districts should not be penalized for parents/guardians exercising their legal rights to exempt their children from standardized tests and/or assessments. The Association believes that states should be encouraged to make test items public after they are no longer used.

B-69. Home Schooling

The National Education Association believes that home schooling programs based on parental choice cannot provide the student with a comprehensive education

experience. When home schooling occurs, students enrolled must meet all state requirements. Home schooling should be limited to the children of the immediate family, with all expenses being borne by the parents/guardians. Instruction should be by persons who are licensed by the appropriate state education licensure agency, and a curriculum approved by the state department of education should be used.

The Association also believes that unfunded homeschooled students should not participate in any extracurricular activities in the public schools.

The Association further believes that local public school systems should have the authority to determine grade placement and/or credits earned toward graduation for students entering or re-entering the public school setting from a home school setting.

C. Promote the Health and Welfare of Children and/or Students

C-4. Tobacco Products

The National Education Association believes that education employees should play a key role in nationwide efforts to educate young people about the dangers of tobacco use and second-hand smoke.

The Association also believes that all governmental promotion of, subsidies for, and involvement in production and distribution of tobacco products should cease.

The Association further believes that all places of public accommodation should be smoke-free and that taxes on tobacco products should be increased.

C-18. Environmentally Safe Schools

The National Education Association believes that all educational facilities must have good indoor air quality, be smoke-free, and be safe from environmental and chemical hazards.

School districts should conduct periodic testing for harmful water and airborne particles/agents that are detrimental to the health of students and education employees and shall report the results publicly.

The Association also believes in the establishment and enforcement of standards of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to ensure health and safety. The Association further believes that pesticide use should be minimized and, if used, advance notice given of location and date of application.

The Association supports ongoing training and certification of education employees who work in potentially hazardous situations. This training must include proper handling, storage, and disposal of hazardous materials and instruction on Materials Safety Data Sheets (MSDS).

Additional health hazards should not be created when facilities are altered or repaired.

The Association believes that school districts must post MSDS and OSHA standards. Students and/or their parents/guardians, education employees, and the public should be notified of actual and potential hazards. All stakeholders should be involved in developing a plan for corrective action. The Association also believes in the development of health and safety standards specifically for children.

C-23. Comprehensive School Health, Social, and Psychological Programs and Services

The National Education Association believes that every child should have direct and confidential access to comprehensive health, social, and psychological programs and services. Such programs and services must be interactive and coordinated within and between school, home, and community settings. School and community efforts must also be integrated to promote the well-being of children and youth and to build support for school and community health programs.

The Association also believes that schools should provide—

a. A healthful psychological climate and a safe physical environment

b. Food services that provide nutritious meals and that help students to select nutritionally appropriate foods.

The Association further believes that programs in the schools should provide—

a. A planned, sequential, pre-K through 12 health education curriculum that promotes sound nutrition and that includes education concerning the health risks associated with obesity

b. A planned, sequential, pre-K through 12 health education curriculum that integrates various health topics (such as drug abuse, violence, safety issues, universal precautions, and HIV education); that is taught by teachers specifically prepared to teach the subject; and that enables students to develop the essential knowledge and skills to maintain personal, family, and community health

c. A planned, sequential, pre-K through 12 physical education curriculum

d. Worksite health promotion to improve the health status of school staff to set an example for desired student behaviors.

The Association believes that services in the schools should include—

a. Counseling programs that provide developmental guidance and broad-based interventions and referrals that promote the physical and psychological health of students

b. Services that identify, diagnose, and resolve learning disabilities

c. Health services provided by a licensed professional school nurse that promote the health of students through prevention, case finding, early intervention, and remediation of specific health problems, that provide first aid and triage of illness and injuries, and that provide health counseling

d. A nurse-to-student ratio at each site that is appropriate to provide quality school health care

e. Comprehensive school-based, community-funded student health care clinics that provide basic health care services (which may include diagnosis and treatment) to supplement school nurses

f. If deemed appropriate by local choice, family-planning counseling and access to birth control methods with instruction in their use

g. Coordination with community agencies for support and follow-up activities.

The Association also believes that all health, social, and psychological services must be provided by appropriately licensed and certificated professional personnel. The Association further believes that education employees, parents/guardians, students, and personnel from community agencies providing services to students must be involved in the development, implementation, and coordination of these services.

The Association urges its affiliates to support legislation to provide comprehensive care to all children and supports community, state, and national efforts to coordinate these services.

C-25. Student Stress and Anger

The National Education Association believes that increasing mental, emotional, and environmental pressures result in drug and alcohol abuse, violence, vandalism, school dropouts, and suicide among children and youth.

The Association also believes stress and anger management programs, including follow-up support, that address the needs of children within both school and community settings, should be provided. Professional development to prepare education employees and training for parents/guardians are necessary to help students deal with stress and anger.

C-35. Media, Games, Products, and Children

The National Education Association recognizes that children are an especially vulnerable and easily exploited audience who must be protected from exposure to violence, prejudice, sexual content, and stereotyping by mass media, the Internet, and products that are accessible to children.

The Association is committed to working cooperatively with media producers, advertisers, and manufacturers in developing products that protect the interests of children. The Association encourages the producers of mass media to select and use age-appropriate subject matter in their products targeted at children. The Association also encourages all radio and television programming executives, when determining the appropriateness of program subject matter and the development of broadcasting schedules, to consider children's ages. The Association further encourages advertisers and media professionals to use standard grammar and correct spelling and to refrain from the use of stereotypical and/or discriminatory terminology and profanity.

The Association encourages the producers of games and toys to make explicit to consumers, prior to purchase, the nature of a product's content through specific labeling. The Association believes that regulations restricting the purchase of games and toys based on age appropriateness should be developed and enforced. The Association deplores exposing children as consumer-test groups to violent interactive games and products in order for manufacturers to determine how to increase or refine the violent content for the express purpose of increasing sales.

The Association also believes that, through media literacy education, education employees, parents/guardians, and children must become critical users of mass media, the Internet, and other products accessible to children. The Association also encourages its affiliates to establish media study committees to monitor media activities and promote positive educational programming. The Association further encourages its affiliates to provide means for education employees to assist parents/guardians in the selection of appropriate media, games, and products for their children.

C-41. Juvenile Offenders

The National Education Association believes that juvenile offenders who are convicted of serious crimes and who are contained in detention centers should be provided a healthy environment conducive to positive social change.

The Association also believes that these juveniles, while in this environment, should be provided with education programs and other support services that will enable them to become contributing members of society. Teachers of these youths must be prepared to provide instruction in life skills and learning skills.

Juvenile offenders who pose a threat to the health and safety of others and who are not placed in these centers should be provided educational services in an appropriate alternative setting rather than the regular public school setting.

The Association supports the placement of juveniles who are not charged with any offense or those who are status offenders in separate facilities from those persons who are charged with criminal offenses.

C-42. Advertising of Alcoholic Beverages and/or Tobacco Products

The National Education Association believes that all forms of advertising of alcoholic beverages and/or tobacco products should be eliminated. The Association also believes that individual performers and organizers of concerts and sporting events should refrain from advertising and/or endorsing alcoholic beverages and/or tobacco products.

D. Promote Professional Excellence Among Educators

D-6. Teacher Preparation Programs: Content and Evaluation

The National Education Association believes that teacher preparation programs must—

a. Involve practicing, licensed pre-K through adult education teachers in the design, implementation, evaluation, and systematic change of the program

b. Involve students preparing to teach in the evaluation and improvement of the program

c. Involve teacher educators who are licensed and practicing in their field of expertise and who also demonstrate practical knowledge of schools and classroom teaching

d. Include a policy of affirmative recruitment

e. Include tests, reports, student teaching, portfolio reviews, and other measures of performance designed to assess progress in acquiring the knowledge and skills necessary for effective teaching

f. Require courses in the liberal arts, subject or grade-level specialty, reading, methodologies for the instruction of students with limited English proficiency, and professional studies that include learning theories, curriculum design, classroom management, behavior management, discipline, student assessment, school accountability, school law, and teaching techniques

g. Include instruction and field experience in the uses of appropriate technology for managing and advancing instruction

h. Include instructional content and experience that address our multicultural, multi-ethnic diversity, recognize the contributions of ethnic and other minorities, and provide techniques for teaching culturally diverse students

i. Involve students preparing to teach in recognizing biases and acquiring the necessary skills and knowledge to assist them in creating a bias-free environment

j. Include instructional content and experience in research and information skills, group processes, shared decision making, strategic planning, the dynamics of intergroup communications, peace and conflict resolution, human growth and development, the changing role of the family, exceptional behaviors, and human relations

k. Include a variety of field experiences throughout the preparation program culminating in clinical practice

l. Include accurate instructional content on the evolution of professional teacher organizations and the advances in the areas of job contracts, salary schedules, benefit programs, and working conditions

m. Include instruction and practical experiences in the processes, strategies, realities, responsibilities, and challenges of shared decision making, problem-solving, and strategic planning

n. Include instructional content in awareness and educational programs of all special education areas recognized by federal law

o. Provide access to professional and preprofessional organizations related to the education profession and areas of certification

p. Promote involvement in an NEA-Student Program local chapter that provides opportunities for community outreach, professional development, and political action

q. Be evaluated and accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE)

r. Be funded at a level that ensures that NCATE accreditation is achieved and maintained.

D-7. Teacher Preparation Programs: Clinical Practice

The National Education Association believes that clinical practice is essential to provide prospective teachers with the experiences necessary to enter the profession and be prepared to teach. Clinical practice contributes to enhanced student learning by fostering the development of a reflective practitioner.

The Association also believes that clinical practice should include a supervised student teaching experience/internship and a post-hiring residency of one year for a prospective teacher to achieve full licensure. Clinical practice provides formal support, instruction, and guidance by a faculty member in a teacher preparation program and by an experienced, licensed pre-K through 12 teacher in the same field of practice.

The Association further believes that prospective teachers completing clinical practice should demonstrate—

a. A comprehensive understanding of the central concepts and structure of the disciplines that they teach

b. A knowledge of how children learn, including how their approaches to learning differ

c. The ability to provide learning opportunities that support the intellectual, social, physical, and personal development of individual students

d. A variety of instructional strategies that encourage students to develop critical thinking skills, problem-solving techniques, positive social interaction, and active engagement in learning

e. The ability to plan instructional strategies based upon knowledge of the subject matter, the students, the community, and the curriculum goals

f. The effective use of formal and informal assessment strategies to evaluate and ensure the continuous intellectual, social, physical, and personal development of individual students

g. The use of active inquiry and collaboration between and among colleagues.

The Association believes that clinical practice experiences provide opportunities to establish essential relationships with other education employees, parents/guardians, and agencies in the community to support students' learning and well-being.

D-10. Mentor Programs

The National Education Association believes that mentor programs are a means of enhancing the professional expertise of employees. The Association also believes that the planning, implementation, and evaluation of such programs must be negotiated or cooperatively developed and maintained by the school district and the local affiliate.

The Association further believes that the duties and responsibilities of all parties must be clearly defined and uniformly administered. Mentors must be selected through a defined process with articulated criteria, be properly trained and compensated, and be provided with adequate time to fulfill their responsibilities. The state or local authority has the obligation to provide hold-harmless protection.

The Association believes that any documentation that results from the mentoring process must be confidential and the sole property of the person mentored and must not be included in the participant's personnel file. The Association also believes that any verbal conversations that result from the mentoring process must also remain confidential.

D-23. Promote the Retention of Experienced Educators

The National Education Association believes that experienced educators are valuable resources in the promotion of educational excellence. The Association also believes that experienced members should be encouraged to remain in, or return to, the education profession. This encouragement should be accomplished through strategies consistent with NEA policy, including, but not limited to, enhanced salaries and benefits, a supportive and respectful work environment, a reasonable workload, and retirement enhancements that reward extended years of service. These strategies can be achieved through bargaining, legislation, or other means.

E. Gain Recognition of the Basic Importance of the Teacher in the Learning Process and Other Employees in the Educational Effort

E-3. Selection and Challenges of Materials and Teaching Techniques

The National Education Association believes that democratic values can best be transmitted in an atmosphere that does not restrain free inquiry and learning. The Association also believes that quality teaching depends on the freedom to select materials and techniques. Teachers and librarians/media specialists must have the right to select and use materials and techniques without censorship or legislative interference. States, school districts, and educational institutions must include teachers and faculty as full voting members on textbook review and adoption committees. Participation must be voluntary and compensated.

The Association deplores prepublishing censorship, book-burning crusades, and attempts to ban books from school libraries/media centers and school curricula. Challenges to the choice of instructional materials and techniques must be orderly and objective, under procedures mutually adopted by professional associations and school governing boards.

Instructional materials and equipment must be provided in sufficient variety and quantity to serve all students.

F. Protect the Rights of Education Employees and Advance their Interests and Welfare

F-8. Basic Contract Standards

The National Education Association believes that collective bargaining agreements between education employees, including part-time and temporary, and their employers should contain certain standard contractual concepts. The Association also believes that, in nonbargaining jurisdictions, these concepts should be incorporated into legislation, employer policy, and/or other sources that establish the terms and conditions of employment for education employees, including part-time and temporary. These concepts include—

a. A grievance procedure that terminates with final and binding arbitration

b. Just cause for any disciplinary action with guaranteed due process through final and binding arbitration and continuation of all employee rights, including full compensation and job security

c. A seniority list that is updated, published, and distributed annually

d. Layoff and recall based only on seniority as bargaining unit members, licensure/certification, and, to the extent legally permissible, affirmative action

e. Employer-paid fringe benefits, including but not limited to comprehensive health, life, dental, vision, and income protection insurance and employee assistance programs, that fully cover bargaining unit members, domestic partners, and their families

f. Membership in the association or the payment of a fair-share fee as a condition of employment

g. Required posting of all vacant or newly created positions along with the right of bargaining unit members to apply for these positions

h. Unassigned preparation, planning, and travel time as applicable for all members of the bargaining unit

i. Specified class size, teaching load, and job description

j. A duty-free lunch period of not less than 30 minutes for all members of the bargaining unit

k. Nondiscriminatory, fair, and equitable treatment of bargaining unit members

l. Contractually defined procedures for evaluation and promotion

m. Released time for Association business with full pay and fringe benefits

n. Parental/child rearing leave for employees to provide care for natural or adopted children

o. Contractually defined procedures for ensuring education employee decision making in curriculum design and related instructional management and reporting systems

p. Time during the regular work day and work year for education employees to plan, to engage in professional development, to work on curriculum and assessment, to mentor and be mentored, and to provide professional leadership

q. Salary schedules based upon preparation, professional growth, and length of service and excluding any form of merit pay except in institutions of higher education where it has been bargained

r. Placement and advancement on the salary schedule based on qualifications and number of years of experience in the profession

s. Extracurricular and extra-duty assignments filled on a voluntary basis and compensated at no less than the employee's regular rate of pay

t. Protection from being required to participate in community service

u. Retirement benefits based on all income derived from school employment, including extracurricular and extra-duty pay

v. Clearly defined bargaining unit membership

w. A guaranteed safe and healthy working environment
x. The school calendar
y. Protection from unilateral changes in terms or conditions of employment
z. Provisions to define class loads, student contact hours, and contract hours for instructors who are involved in distance education, and to guarantee that technology and distance education are not used to supplant employees.

F-9. Salaries and Other Compensation

The National Education Association believes that salary and other compensation structures for education employees are matters for collective bargaining. The Association also believes that any proposed or legislated salary and other compensation structure should not bypass or undermine the bargaining process or negotiated agreements. The Association further believes that, in nonbargaining jurisdictions, salary schedules should be incorporated into legislation, employer policy, and/or other sources that establish the terms and conditions of employment for education employees.

The Association believes that salary schedules should—

a. Provide for entry-level salaries and career earnings comparable to those of other professions and occupations with similar preparation and responsibilities and be structured to provide compensation levels that encourage classroom teachers to remain in the classroom and support professionals in the educational setting
b. Be based on preparation, academic degrees, experience, professional growth, responsibilities, and full length of service
c. Assure that initial placement and advancement on the salary schedule are nondiscriminatory
d. Provide additional compensation for certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards
e. Provide and maintain structural integrity through the use of an index or percentage guide for experience increments and levels of academic preparation
f. Assure that salary paid for summer employment, continuing education programs, extended contracts, conducting employee training or workshops, and extra duty is not less than the rate for regular pay
g. Assure that salaries paid in early childhood, nontraditional, adult, and alternative programs be on par with salaries paid in traditional programs and that any personnel serving lower socioeconomic groups not be paid less than equivalent educational professionals providing similar service to higher socioeconomic groups
h. Define "salary increase" to mean the exact monetary differential between the existing salary schedule and the proposed salary schedule—exclusive of incremental adjustments—and all basic benefits.

The Association opposes providing additional compensation to attract and/or retain education employees in hard-to-recruit positions.

The Association also believes that local affiliates can best promote the economic welfare of all education employees, regardless of source of funding, by following the salary standards developed at the state and national levels.

The Association further believes that performance pay schedules, such as merit pay or any other system of compensation based on an evaluation of an education employee's performance, are inappropriate.

The Association believes that its affiliates should seek the repeal of laws limiting maximum salaries and benefits for education employees.

The Association also believes that there should be no limit to the number of years of experience an education employee can transfer.

The Association further believes that, if school districts consolidate or separate, education employees should not lose their tenure or have their salary, benefits, or seniority reduced.

F-18. Protection of Education Employees

The National Education Association believes that education employees must be safe in schools and that federal and state legislation protecting all education employees should be enacted. The Association also believes that affiliates, school districts and governing boards, law enforcement agencies, and courts should work cooperatively to ensure the strict enforcement of all laws within public schools and educational institutions.

The Association further believes that all education employees working with a student having a record of violent behavior or severe behavior problems should be immediately informed of the nature, extent, and duration of the student's record of violent acts/disruptive behaviors. Before student placement, these employees should also be provided with teaching strategies that may impact the student's learning style and a plan for behavior management and modification.

The Association believes that when education employees are the victims of physical attack, verbal abuse, theft, vandalism, or harassment due to gender, sexual orientation/gender identification, or other causes, they should receive the full support of their employer in pursuing legal and other remedies, as well as receiving reimbursement for their personal and property loss. Time lost due to injuries from attacks should not be deducted from accumulated sick leave.

The Association also believes that education employees and the local affiliate must have the right to reflect professional concerns at a student suspension or expulsion hearing.

F-41. Hepatitis Vaccinations

The National Education Association believes that governing boards should provide free hepatitis vaccinations to all employees choosing to be or required to be vaccinated.

F-42. Health Care Issues Awareness

The National Education Association supports health care issues awareness programs designed to help those coping with catastrophic illnesses. The Association also supports efforts to educate students, education employees, and the general public about such programs and about the benefits of blood, organ, and tissue donation.

F-44. Medication and Medical Services in Schools

The National Education Association believes that procedures should be established for students who must use prescribed medication or who need other medical services during school hours.

The Association also believes that established procedures should provide that—

a. Only licensed medical personnel be required to administer such medication or perform such medical services
b. A physician's written verification of the student's need for medication or services be required
c. Written permission of the parent/guardian be required
d. The initial dosage of medication not be given in the school except in life-threatening situations. Initial dosage is the first dosage administered from the prescription
e. Each medication given be recorded on a medication log that includes date, time, and signature of the person giving the medication
f. Medication be delivered in and dispensed from a container properly labeled with the name and strength of medication, name of patient, name of physician, date of the original prescription, and directions for use
g. Proper storage for the medication be available.

The Association further believes that education employees who are not licensed medical personnel should be protected from all liability if they are required to administer medication or perform medical services. The Association believes that such education employees should have the right to refuse to administer medication or perform medical services without fear of repercussion.

F-56. Retirement

The National Education Association shall provide leadership in retirement issues and believes that state and local retirement systems and programs should include—

a. Boards of trustees with a majority elected by and from the membership and of sufficient size to assure an adequate number of representatives from among retired members. Subject to their fiduciary responsibilities, these boards should also have all the powers necessary to ensure their independence from the plan sponsor, including the power to obtain by employment or contract the services necessary to exercise the trustees' powers and perform the trustees' duties, including actuarial, auditing, custodial, investment, and legal services.
b. Retirement boards will be in charge of administering benefits as well as investments
c. Actuarial and investment policies that produce sound financing
d. Assets of the retirement system be used for the sole benefit of the beneficiaries of the system. Any other proposal to use the assets of a retirement system be adopted only if it is determined that it will have no negative actuarial impact on the system
e. All member pension plans, except higher education, have as a basis an adequate and fully funded defined benefit plan
f. A benefit that will maintain real replacement income levels of at least 75 percent of the highest single year's rate of salary after 30 years of service (and at least 50 percent after 20 years of creditable service) and automatic cost-of-living increases (without regard to age) to maintain purchasing power for retirees and beneficiaries. Normal retirement will also be available at age 55, irrespective of length of service, if fully vested, where actuarially sound.
g. Immediate and full vesting after not more than five years of service
h. Annual independent review and audit
i. Provisions for employee contributions to be a percentage of total compensation, not to exceed the amount contributed by employers. The employer may pay part or all of the employee contribution
j. Provisions permitting the purchase of credit earned while a member of another retirement system
k. Provisions permitting the purchase of credit for sabbatical leaves, maternity/paternity/adoption leaves, and any other approved leaves of absences
l. Normal retirement of at least 50 percent of the highest single year's rate of salary after 20 years of creditable service or at age 55 if fully vested, where actuarially sound, and with provisions that guarantee the employee with full benefits earned from all sources. Voluntary retirement should follow the same provisions
m. Disability retirement for a service-connected disability available to education employees from the first day of employment. Nonservice-connected disability retirement shall be available after five years of service. The benefit formula for disability retirement should yield benefits comparable to those of normal retirement
n. Automatic cost-of-living increases, without regard to age, to maintain purchasing power for retirees and beneficiaries
o. A joint federal-state program to provide those who have been employed in two or more states, in Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) schools, or in other government schools with benefits substantially the same as they would have received if they had retired after a career in one state. Affiliates are urged to support state statutes and proposed federal legislation or any program providing portability coverage
p. Full funding and equitable administration in the granting of retirement credit for service in the military, the Peace Corps, or Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) or provision for purchasing up to five years of retirement credit for service in the military, the Peace Corps, or VISTA
q. Nondiscrimination on the basis of gender or marital status
r. Retirement credit for unused sick leave
s. All compensation, including extra-duty pay, in computing retirement benefits
t. Benefits not reduced by other sources of income, including Social Security benefits
u. Pre-retirement counseling
v. Retirement housing facilities that are funded from sources other than those designated for retirement benefits
w. Education employees' contributions and benefits that are not subject to federal income taxation
x. Nondiscriminatory Internal Revenue Service rules and regulations
y. An annual financial statement distributed to all members
z. Tax-sheltered annuity and deferred compensation plans with a broad choice of programs available to all members. These plans should have actuarial tables that do not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, or national origin
aa. Provisions to purchase pension credit for any previous Department of Defense teaching service
bb. Fully paid comprehensive health insurance, including reimbursement for Medicare Part B premiums, for retired education employees, their spouses, domestic partners, and/or dependents
cc. Benefits that are free from double taxation or source taxation by states for retirees living outside of the state where the benefits were earned
dd. All retirement benefits for spouses equally available for domestic partners
ee. Benefit formulas that provide full-year credit for each school year worked and provide that credit regardless of the number of hours worked per day.

F-57. Investment of Retirement System Assets and Protection of Earned Benefits

The National Education Association believes that retirement system assets can be invested in any type of investment that plays an appropriate role in achieving risk and return objectives reasonably suited to the retirement program. In the investment and management of retirement systems assets, and in a manner consistent with their fiduciary responsibilities and all applicable federal, state, and local statutes, trustees should, among other circumstances, consider—

a. General economic conditions
b. The possible effect of inflation or deflation
c. The role that each investment or course of action plays within the overall portfolio of the retirement program
d. The expected total return from income and appreciation of capital
e. Needs for liquidity, regularity of income, and preservation or appreciation of capital
f. The adequacy of funding for defined benefit plans based on reasonable actuarial factors
g. Protection of the long-term employment interests and opportunities of participants in the plan
h. Opposition to investments in corporations whose policies or expenditures of funds undermine child welfare and/or public education, when other investments provide equivalent benefits to retirement system members.

Boards of trustees charged with the authority to invest and manage the assets of public employee retirement systems should adopt a statement of investment objectives and policies for each retirement program that include—

a. The desired rate of return on assets overall
b. The desired rate of return and acceptable levels of risk for each asset class
c. Asset allocation goals
d. Guidelines for the delegation of authority
e. Information on the types of reports to be used to evaluate performance.

The Association also believes that the boards of trustees of education employee retirement systems should make every effort, consistent with their fiduciary obligations, to participate in the decision-making process of corporations in which the systems hold stock by casting stockholder votes that benefit the interests of the participants and beneficiaries of the retirement systems and those of the united education profession and by electing to corporate boards members and/or representatives who support public education. The Association further believes that the boards of trustees of public employee retirement systems should coordinate their voting in companies in which they have a mutual interest.

The Association believes that the assets of retirement systems in which public education employees participate should be managed and invested for the sole and exclusive benefit of the participants and beneficiaries of those systems. Expenditures from a system trust fund should only be made for the benefit of trust beneficiaries and for the reasonable expenses of administering the system. All retirement benefits earned by education employees should, under the law, be payable to such employees. Existing retirement benefits should be maintained or improved. No person participating in a retirement system should be required to accept any reduction in benefits below those in force at any time during the period of membership. The retirement benefits are earned, and therefore, inviolate.

The Association is aware of incursions on retirement system assets by state and municipal governments. Such incursions involve either a misuse of assets or the failure to appropriate required funds to the system. Both practices result in increasing accrued liabilities, which reduces the financial soundness of the system and jeopardizes the security of education employee retirement benefits. Retirement systems can best be protected by the passage of state constitutional protections against any diminution of plan assets that is not in the sole interest of plan participants and beneficiaries or, absent such constitutional safeguards, by at least the passage of federal and/or state legislation that provides for protections against any diminution of plan assets that is not in the sole interest of plan participants and beneficiaries.

The Association also believes that a retirement system should be exempt from federal regulations when its plan is in compliance with minimal standards prescribed by federal, state, and local statutes.

F-58. Social Security

The National Education Association believes that Social Security should be available to eligible education employees where desired, but should not be mandated. Contracts with Social Security should provide for supplementary plans rather than integrated or coordinated plans.

The Association also believes Social Security benefits should be guaranteed at no less than the current level. The benefits should continue to guarantee inflation adjusted retirement income as well as continue to provide guaranteed inflation adjusted survivor benefits for the families of deceased workers and disabled workers and their families.

The Association further believes that Social Security retirement and survivor benefits should be based upon the Social Security program and Social Security taxes. Health and disability programs should be removed from the Social Security program and financed from general tax revenues. The Association supports the goal of comprehensive health insurance for retirees.

The Association supports the reform of Social Security laws to eliminate discriminatory offset provisions and discrimination based on sex, marital status, or time of retirement and to reduce the retirement age. The Association also supports reforms to improve the financial security and stability of the Social Security system without the privatization of the system. No benefit promised or no benefit for which money has been collected should be withdrawn without adequate replacement.

I. Promote and Protect Human and Civil Rights

I-39. Elimination of Discrimination

The National Education Association is committed to the elimination of discrimination based on race, gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation/gender identification, and all other forms of discrimination.

The National Education Association believes that honest and open conversation is a precursor to change. The Association encourages its members and all other members of the educational community to engage in courageous conversations in order to examine assumptions, prejudices, discriminatory practices, and their effects.

The Association condemns any code or system of discrimination and exploitation. The Association also believes that sanctions are both justified and necessary against governments, organizations, businesses, and/or groups that utilize or support discriminatory practices.

I-43. Hate-Motivated Violence

The National Education Association believes that hate-motivated violence, including, but not limited to, physical and verbal violence against individuals or groups because of their race, color, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation/gender identification, age, disability, size, marital status, or economic condition is deplorable. The Association also believes that the threat or promotion of such violence is equally deplorable. The Association further believes that federal, state, and local governments and community groups must oppose and eliminate hate-motivated violence and that current events and/or economic conditions should not diminish such opposition.

I-54. Ethnic-Minority Educators

The National Education Association believes that multiracial teaching staffs are essential to the operation of schools. The Association deplores the current trend of diminishing numbers of ethnic-minority educators.

The Association urges local and state affiliates and appropriate governing bodies and agencies to work to achieve and maintain ethnic diversity in all categories of educational employment. The Association also urges Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) schools actively to recruit and hire ethnic-minority educators.

J. Obtain for its Members the Benefits of an Independent, United Education Profession

J-5. Student Member Participation

The National Education Association believes that eligible students should have the opportunity to join the Association. The Association also believes that students should be encouraged to participate in the Association at the local, state, and national levels. Preprofessional and leadership training should be priorities.

The Association further believes that its members should promote membership in the NEA Student Program to all eligible students, including student teachers in members' classrooms, and provide opportunities for community outreach, professional development, and political action. The Association believes that advisors of NEA Student chapters should be members of the Association.

J-6. Retired Member Participation

The National Education Association believes that retired members should be active participants within the Association at the national, state, and local levels.

Retired members should be involved in areas such as political action, legislative lobbying, member training, crisis assistance, development and maintenance of educational excellence, welfare and safety of children, public relations, and retirement issues.

The Association also believes that its members should promote membership in the Retired Program to all eligible members.

J-7. Promotion of Teaching as a Career Choice

The National Education Association supports the establishment of organizations involving students interested in the field of education as a profession. The Association believes that its state and local affiliates should promote the establishment of such organizations at all age levels and encourage its members to serve as advisers.

The Association also believes that state and local affiliates should strive to build cooperative relationships with government, business, and community leaders to promote the field of education as a profession and as a vital role in every community.

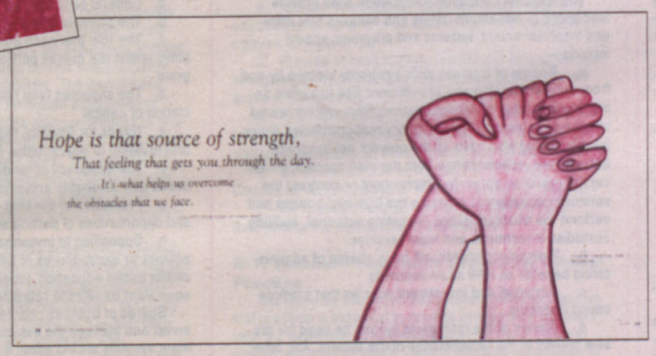
Finding Hope in Tragedy

MESSAGES TO GROUND ZERO
CHILDREN RESPOND TO SEPTEMBER 11, 2001
Collected by Shelley Harwayne with the New York City Board of Education

A collection of art and poems by New York City public school children serves up compelling food for thought on this first anniversary of the September 11 terrorist attacks.

EXCERPT

Imagine a world that's all the same
Of one color, one race, and even one name...
Is that a world that's worth creating?
Where day by day our lives keep fading
Our differences make us who we really are
So let's stop the fighting and let's stop the war!
—Emerita Quito, age 14


Hope is that source of strength,
That feeling that gets you through the day.
It's what helps us overcome
the obstacles that we face.

MESSAGES TO GROUND ZERO: CHILDREN RESPOND TO SEPTEMBER 11
Collected by **Shelley Harwayne and the New York City Board of Education**
176 pp. $14.95 paperback; Heinemann
To order, visit www.heinemann.com or call 800/225-5800.

It would be difficult to ponder the cruel impact of last September 11 without thinking foremost about children. Children now without parents. Children trying to make sense of a tragedy even adults haven't fully grasped. Children in disbelief that hatred could manifest itself so wretchedly.

Yet, as *Messages to Ground Zero* reminds us, children have a remarkable knack for understanding the nuances of tragedy—and more profoundly, for expressing creatively what they know. It is what they do here, valiantly, in a collection of images, poems, and essays that speak as much to the pain of that horrific day as to its hidden promise.

The children of the New York City Public Schools bear witness in this sparkling volume. For them, especially, the task of crafting these works could not have been easy. As the World Trade Center towers fell, they were the ones who smelled the smoke and heard the human wails—the ones who would watch the daily cleanup and suffer the nightmares.

Yet one senses from this collection that perhaps the very act of writing and drawing became these students' footpath to healing.

We hear the angst and, of course, feel the sadness—lots of it. But we also are bowled over by expressions of patriotism, peace, love, and hope.

In one essay, a 13-year-old Russian boy pretends to go back in time and stand face to face with Osama bin Laden, the child. "I look into his eyes and try to ask him, 'Do you need help? Do you need love?'" In his imaginary world, the boy has the power to kill little bin Laden. But recalling his war-torn years in Russia, he decides: "I cannot...I am not an evil person who can kill another."

It's all good stuff—and a blaring affirmation of the essential role of the arts in children's lives. Shelley Harwayne, the superintendent of New York School District #2 who assembled the book, says the students' impulse to write and paint was natural and immediate.

After the attack, so much "incredible" poetry and art poured into her office that she suggested the chancellor put out a call to all the city's superintendents. They received an overwhelming response and quickly earmarked profits from the resulting book to benefit children who lost friends or family that day.

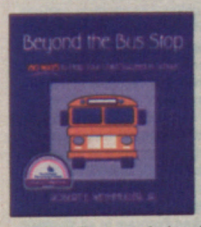
"When people are coping with tragedies," Harwayne says, "they create beautiful things."

The desire, of course, is for others to be inspired by these works, talk about them, muse, and in the end, be hopeful. After all, if the children of New York can live through the deadliest terrorist act on American soil and still see promise, doesn't this say something about our own resilience? ✔

—*Marilyn Milloy*

BOOKS by NEA Members

Beyond the Bus Stop
By Robert Weyhmuller, Jr.



Parents obviously play a vital role in children's education, but sometimes they don't know the best ways to help their kids. *Beyond the Bus Stop* offers 180 tips on how parents can guide children to succeed in school. With 22 years of classroom experience, the author provides practical, jargon-free tips on working with teachers, homework, social skills, keeping kids healthy, and more. 198 pp. $11.95 from Heinemann. Order online at www.heinemann.com.

Here's How to Reach Me: Matching Instruction to Personality Type in Your Classroom
By Judith A. Pauley, Dianne F. Bradley, and Joseph F. Pauley

This guide for effective classroom management describes six personality types present in students and uses narratives to show teachers how to motivate each type. The concepts can bring new efficiency to staff and parent collaboration. 216 pp. $24.95 from Brookes Publishing Co. Order online at www.brookespublishing.com.

Look Again! Appealing Bulletin Board Ideas for Secondary Students
By Judy Serritella

Tired of putting up the same bulletin board every year? Then peruse this book for some new ideas. Choose from more than 200 suggestions, grouped by subject, that are simple enough to create quickly and designed to make students and faculty take notice. $36.95 from Linworth Publishing, Inc. Order online at www.linworth.com.

Using Journals with Reluctant Writers
By Scott Abrams

A language arts tool for teachers who want to persuade students to start the flow of ideas, this book demonstrates how to effectively lead students through critical thinking and relevant and proficient writing. Each chapter begins with a quote, offers questions for reflection and prompts for essay writing, and ends with a list of suggested videos and related readings. 146 pp. $29.95 from Corwin Press, Inc. Order online at www.corwinpress.com.

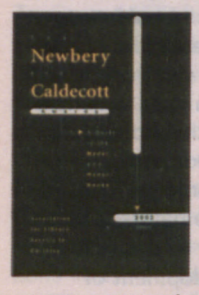
FREE OR INEXPENSIVE

National Board Certification

If you were wondering what it takes to be a National Board Certified teacher, *The National Board Certification Handbook*, edited by Diane Barone, is a must read. This handbook not only breaks down how much time certification takes and what the requirements are, but the contributors also share tips and examples to guide you through the preparation process. 117 pp. $15 from Stenhouse Publishers. To order, call 800/363-0566 or visit www.stenhouse.com

Newbery and Caldecott Awards

To see what books have been honored this year, pick up the 2002 edition of the *Newbery and Caldecott Awards: A Guide to the Medal and Honor Books*. The awards acknowledge exemplary works for children, and the book includes recent as well as past winners back to 1922. 178 pp. $19 from the American Library Association. To order, call 866/746-7252 or visit www.alastore.ala.org.



Getting Grants

All schools need more money to improve student learning, and grant writing is a good way to get it. In *How to Get Grants and Gifts for the Public Schools* by Stanley Levenson, you'll learn how to apply for government, corporate, and foundation grants. The book includes instructions on how to write grants, complete with samples of the federal grant application and successful applications. 139 pp. $23 from Allyn and Bacon. To order, visit www.ablongman.com or call 800/666-9433.

It's Better to Give

Does it ever seem you aren't getting anywhere with students? Then you should read a few pages of *Teachers with the Courage to Give: Everyday Heroes Making a Difference in Our Classrooms*. Teachers share their tragedies and triumphs in touching and encouraging stories. Edited by Jackie Waldman, the succinct reflections remind discouraged educators just how important and special they are. 240 pp. $16.95 from Conari Press. To order, call 800/685-9595 or visit www.conari.com.

A Word to the Wise

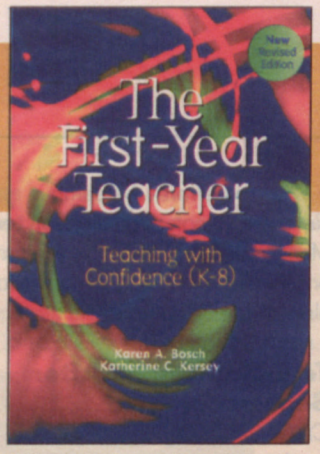
Ever wonder why some of the most powerful and intelligent people fall due to the most ridiculous things? The contributors of *Why Smart People Can Be So Stupid*, edited by Robert J. Sternberg, examine these people and situations from many angles and offer insightful answers. 288 pp. $29.95 from Yale University Press. To order, visit www.yalebooks.com.

Considering Special Ed?

Drawing on more than 25 years' experience of teaching young adults with autism, Jim Yerman gives tips and encouragement for teachers who want to work in special education in *So You Want to Be a Special Education Teacher....* He also discusses how autistic students integrate into U.S. schools. 196 pp. $19.95 from Future Horizons Inc. To order, call 800/489-0727 or visit www.FutureHorizons-autism.com.

Correction

In the March issue, the American Association of University Women's (AAUW) credit line for the publication, *Girls in the Middle: Working to Succeed in School* was inadvertently omitted. *Girls in the Middle* and its accompanying video were commissioned and published by the AAUW Educational Foundation.



NEW from the NEA Professional Library

The First-Year Teacher: Teaching with Confidence (K-8)
By Karen A. Bosch and Katharine C. Kersey
168 pp. $16.95 NEA members
$20.95 nonmembers
#2014-6-00-FN

Written by experienced teachers and recently revised—with 24 new pages of material—*The First-Year Teacher* offers step-by-step plans for the critical first four weeks of school. New teachers will find tips for communicating with parents, strategies for dealing with paperwork, solutions to common discipline problems, and activities to acclimate elementary and middle school students to their new classrooms. If you're new to teaching or merely new to your school, let *The First-Year Teacher* be your guide to a confident and successful year.

To order, call 800/229-4200, or check the Web at www.nea.org/books.

EXCERPT

Your school's open house is a valuable opportunity for making a good first impression with parents. Here [is] a great idea for making parents feel welcome and getting your students involved in the event.

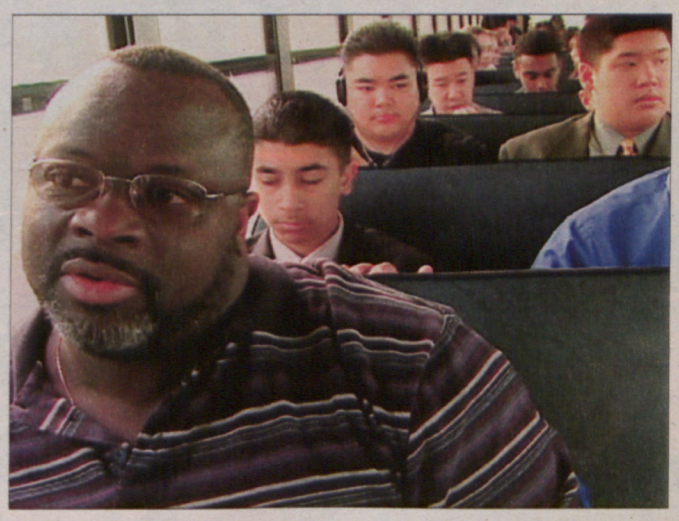
• Prepare a video depicting the school day to show to parents. Show students involved in various activities—academic subjects, special activities, lunch, getting on the bus. This is an excellent way for parents to learn what life is like for their kids, and it lets you "off the hook" from having to stand up in front of parents the entire night.

TVTIPS

Accidental Hero: Room 408

PBS, September 19, 8 p.m., ET, check local listings.

NEA member Tommie Lindsey, a San Francisco East Bay high school teacher, changes the direction of students' lives by introducing them to forensics—competitive speech, debate, and oral interpretation. In a school where fewer than 38 percent of students go to college, almost 100 percent of Lindsey's classes continue on with post-high school education. This documentary follows Lindsey's racially diverse class for two years—from the classroom to the state forensic championship—and captures how Lindsey creates champions by guiding students to become confident competitors, who articulately confront issues of race, poverty, and cultural awareness in front of large audiences.



Primary Science Readers' Theatre

By Sharon Solomon

Get students reading with the 11 original scripts in this book. Each piece deals with science topics including habitats, nutrition, space, energy, dinosaurs, and the food chain. Scripts have enough parts for all to participate. Suggested songs reinforce concepts, while follow-up activities develop higher level thinking skills. 112 pp. $14.95 from Pieces of Learning. To order, call 800/729-5137.

TVTIPS

On September 11, all of the major networks—NBC, ABC, CBS, and FOX—will air special programming to commemorate the tragic events of last fall. Check local listings for specific programs and time.

Looking Back to 9/11

The History Channel, September 2-14, check local listings.
The History Channel will air several programs focusing on the World Trade Center, the war in Afghanistan, and the history of Islam. The programs inlcude:

- *The World Trade Center: Rise and Fall of an American Icon*—focuses on the building and the destruction of the towers from an engineering perspective;
- *The Day the Towers Fell*—the first photographers at the site when the towers collapsed recount their stories;
- *Inside Islam*—an in-depth look at the world's fastest-growing religion;

Department of Defense

- *War on Terror—A Year in Review*—A look at the war on terror.

Many programs will air more than once; check local listings for a complete schedule.

Teaching Civics After September 11

CNN, CNN Student News, September 10-14, check local listings.
CNN's four-part series looks at American students coping with last fall's tragedy. Part I explores how K-12 students feel about their world. Are they more patriotic or pessimistic about the future? Part II asks publishers, historians, and teachers if the civics curriculum has changed. Part III examines civics outside the classroom. Are students more interested in voting and political activism? And, Part IV compares the United States' past and future regarding constitutional government. At what other time in our history has our country faced a similiar challenge, and how did we respond?

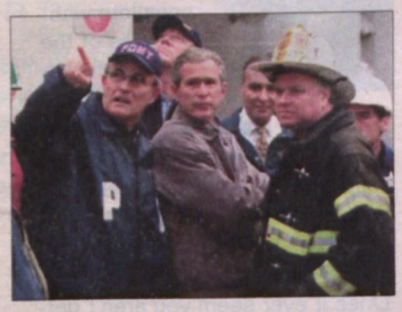
A Tragedy Remembered

A&E, September 11, all day, check local listings.
A&E looks at last fall's events with these programs:

- *Investigative Reports: Anatomy of September 11*—the story of the 100 minutes that changed the world;
- *Minute by Minute: Attack on the Pentagon*—first-person accounts of the day's events with archival footage;
- *Biography: Rudolph Guiliani*—the former New York City Mayor's reflections on his upbringing, political career, and September 11.

In Memoriam: September 11, 2001, New York City

HBO, September 11, check local listings.
HBO will rebroadcast this documentary that follows Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani and his staff through the events of September 11—from the first realization of what happened, through smoke and fire, rescue and recovery, and despair and tears to a newfound strength. The program combines archival documents, eyewitness accounts, and news footage.



The Aftermath of Terror

MTV, Monday mornings, 4 a.m., ET, check local listings.
Examine the sorrow, suspicion, and fear that haunt a New Jersey town following September 11. The film presents the experiences of Arab-Americans in the town and one family's sorrow over the loss of their son. It also looks at the community that unwittingly harbored six of the terrorists, as it tries to overcome discrimination and prejudice.

In Search of America

ABC, September 3-8, primetime, check local listings.
This six-part series, hosted by news anchor Peter Jennings, takes viewers on a journey through modern-day America. The show examines areas of American life, such as religion, government, culture, and immigration, and relates them to history and the ideas of our nation's founders. *In Search of America*, which will also appear in book form, features a companion website (www.abcnews.com/America) with an online teaching guide for educators on each part of the series.

Classrooms in Crisis

A&E, A&E Classroom, September 12, 7 a.m., ET, check local listings.
Studies predict that within the next three to five years, half of the teachers hired today will quit. As these teachers turn to careers in other fields, the overall number of understaffed schools and overcrowded classrooms continues to grow. In this special, teachers, administrators, and parents reflect on what is happening in their schools and how the ensuing crisis can be averted.

Niagara: A History of the Falls

The History Channel, September 11-12, 6 a.m., ET, check local listings.
Located right in the middle of the state of New York and the province of Ontario, Niagara Falls is considered to be one of the most spectacular natural wonders on the North American continent. This show examines the natural and commercial history of the falls, and its role in the development of North American culture.

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Visit **hertz.com**, call your travel agent or call Hertz at **1-800-654-2210.**

Important Rental Information: Advance reservations are required as blackout periods may apply in some cities at some times, especially during periods of peak demand. This offer is redeemable at participating Hertz locations in the U.S. (excluding Hawaii), Canada and Puerto Rico and is subject to vehicle availability. Weekend rentals may be picked up starting noon Thursday through noon Saturday and must be returned by 11:59 pm Monday. Thursday weekend rentals must be for at least three days. This offer has no cash value, and may not be used with any other CDP#, coupon, discount, rate or promotion. Hertz standard driver and credit qualifications for the renting location apply and the car must be returned to that location. Minimum rental age is 25 (exceptions apply). Taxes, tax reimbursement, airport-related fees, vehicle license fees and optional service charges, such as refueling, are not subject to discount. Call for details.

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Hispanic Heritage Month

CNN, CNN Student News, September 15-October 15, weekdays at 4:30 a.m., ET, check local listings.

In September, in conjunction with Hispanic Heritage Month, CNN Student News will focus on current issues prevalent in the U.S. Hispanic community. An online classroom guide for teachers is available at www.CNNstudentnews.com.

Teenage Suicide: The Silent Threat

A&E, A&E Classroom, September 11, 7 a.m., ET, check local listings.

Teenage suicide incidents have more than tripled since the 1950s. Although they still do not fully understand the reasoning behind it, experts agree that teenage suicide does not discriminate and can affect any home or family. In this special, experts describe the many probable causes of this tragedy, and parents of teenagers who have committed suicide share their stories.

POV: Two Towns of Jasper

PBS, September, ET, check local listings.

Emmett Till was lynched in Jasper, Texas, in 1955. In 1998, another racially motivated murder took place in Jasper. James Byrd, an African American, was chained to a truck and dragged behind it for three miles. This collaboration between an African American and a Caucasian filmmaker documents contrasting views on racial interactions in this Texas town, giving an explicit portrait of race in America.

Between the Lions

PBS, September 16-November 18, ET, check local listings.

The family of lions in this kids' series runs a unique sort of library, one in which the characters from books come alive, vowels sing, and words have minds of their own. Children learn to read through fun activities involving puppets, animation, live action, and music, all from a research-based curriculum. Visit the "Between the Lions" companion website at www.pbskids.org/lions.

Classic Arts Showcase

Classic Arts Showcase provides free programming 24 hours a day of ballet, opera, theater, film, art exhibits, and classical music. To see which stations carry Classic Arts Showcase, or to order it, go to www.classicartsshowcase.org or call 323/878-0329.

WEB WINNERS

Remembering September 11

NEA and the NEA Health Information Network are developing a September 11 Remembered website with the help of a $50,000 grant from Johnson & Johnson. In one place, teachers, parents, and students can discover ideas, lesson plans, and discussion points to help in sharing and learning from this tragedy. Educators are encouraged to send in their own best lesson plans and parent-child activities. Go to www.neahin.org/programs/schoolsafety/september11/index.htm.

Johnson & Johnson

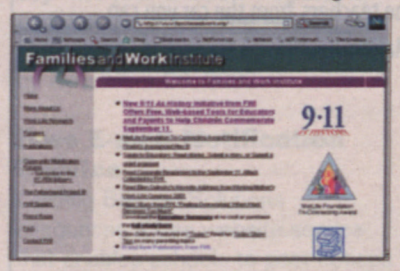
Why the Towers Fell

At this NOVA and PBS website, you can learn about the construction of the World Trade Center towers and how the basic laws of metals and

heat transfer all came into play when planes crashed into the towers. The site also personalizes its scientific approach by including a firsthand account of a man who escaped from a floor where the planes struck. Go to www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/wtc/.

9/11 Curriculum Tools

A "9/11 as History" site from the Families and Work Institute provides free, downloadable curriculum tools to help teachers talk with students about September 11. The curriulum comprises 16 lesson plans for prekindergarten through 12th-grade students on topics such as safety and fear, media awareness, and more. Go to www.familiesandwork.org.

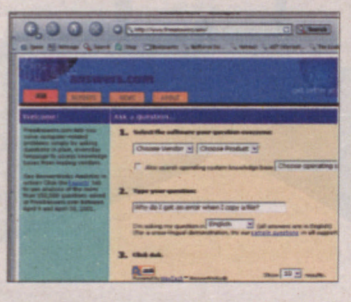


Homework Help

Here's an easy access point that provides teachers, students, and parents a single source for posting and verifying homework assignments for grades K-12. There are no registration fees, and free e-mail and homepages are provided for teachers. Go to www.yourhomework.com.

Tech Support

Computer help is only a click away at freeanswers.com. Here you can ask computer-related questions in plain English, and equally simple answers appear within seconds. If you have a printer problem or can't open a file, this site can most likely give you the answers. Go to www.freeanswers.com.

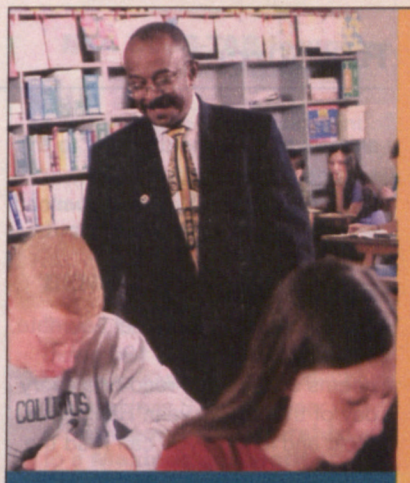


Science Sites

An extensive collection of science websites categorized by subject and grade level, Science Net Links provides sites for teachers and students. Subjects include The Nature of Technology, The Living Environment, and Historical Perspectives. All sites are reviewed for content and accuracy. Go to www.sciencenetlinks.com/resource_index.htm.

Sounding Off

As more students use software such as Microsoft® PowerPoint® to enhance projects, they look on the Internet for clip art and images for their presentations. They also want sound clips. FindSounds.com has over 100 downloadable sounds from



Charles Bennerman, National Board Certified Teacher
East Columbus High School
Lake Waccamaw, NC

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animals to household noises to the sounds of the weather. Visit http://findsounds.com to download some cool sound effects.

Poetry 180

The United States' Nobel Laureate, Billy Collins, selected 180 great poems so kids can read one every day of the school year. Ranging in topic and length, you can read the

poems right off the site. Go to www.loc.gov/poetry/180/.

Family Math

Learn practical math with your family at this site, which features 80 10-minute problems on topics such as seeing how far a paper airplane can fly and calculating when people really watch certain television shows. Each activity encourages everyone to think about how math is used in our lives. Go to www.figurethis.org/challenges/toc.htm.

Congratulations to Warren Phillips!

Grand Prize Winner of the 2002 Chevy™ Malibu® Teaching Excellence Awards

Here's to **Warren Phillips** and the students who inspire him to be the best. Singing songs, conducting monthly TV interviews, participating in games and storytelling are only some of the ways seventh-grade science students learn at Plymouth Community Intermediate School in Plymouth, Mass. Warren's dedication to creating a rich, multimedia, multi-sensory science learning experience has earned him a new 2002 Chevy Malibu LS and $2000 for his classroom.

Mr. Phillips strives, "to foster a classroom filled with questioning, motivated students," and he expects them to learn more than dry theories and scientific formulas. Regular field trips to places like the Blue Hills of Massachusetts and the shores of Cape Cod expose his students to real-world experimentation. And through his close involvement with the local community and national teaching programs, Warren not only opens up a world of possibilities to his students, he also teaches them civic responsibility.

Many factors influence a child's success in school, but great teaching is the one factor that can make the biggest impact. Chevy would like to congratulate Warren Phillips and his students, along with the other prizewinners and entrants of the 2002 Chevy Malibu Teaching Excellence Awards. Here's to the teachers, from the car you can depend on every day. Chevy Malibu.

TIME FOR KIDS

CHEVY MALIBU WE'LL BE THERE™

ANNOUNCEMENTS

National Civic Participation Week

September 11-17 marks this year's National Civic Participation Week, a showcase of American democracy and civic participation that honors the courageous spirit of the American people and will pay tribute to those we lost on September 11. Participate America, through ParticipateAmerica.org, will also serve as a dynamic tool to educate citizens about American democracy and promote civic participation through volunteerism, voting, and taking an active role in civic life.

Show Your Support

Your classes can encourage the service men and women fighting the "War Against Terrorism" in the U.S. armed forces by writing letters to them in the Friends of Our Troops letter writing campaign. For more information, send your name and address to Friends of Our Troops, P.O. Box 65408, Fayetteville, NC 28306. Or, visit www.troopfanmail.net/album.htm.

Team America Rocketry Challenge

NEA is a proud partner of the first national model rocket competition for U.S. high school students. Participating students are challenged to design, build, and fly a multi-stage model rocket that takes two raw eggs and an electronic altimeter to exactly 1500 feet and returns the eggs intact. The top five winning teams will share a total prize pool of $59,000. For more information, visit www.RocketContest.org.

Math, Science, and Tech Competition

Applications for the 2002 Siemens Westinghouse Competition in Math, Science, and Technology are available at www.siemens-foundation.org. The deadline for entries is October 1, 2002. High school students may enter the competition individually or as part of a team to compete for college scholarships ranging from $1,000 to $10,000. Entries are judged at the regional and national levels. For more information, visit www.siemens-foundation.org.

Need a Free Computer?

The Department of Defense (DOD) is giving away free computers to schools and educational non-

DIVERSITY Calendar

September

September 9—1957 Civil Rights Act passed
President Eisenhower passed the Civil Rights Act of 1957 to ensure the voting rights of African Americans and other minorities. For more, go to www.historylearningsite.co.uk.

September 15-October 15—National Hispanic Heritage Month
Each year, America honors the contributions Hispanic Americans have made and continue to make to our nation. For more, see www.education-world.com/a_lesson/lesson023.shtml or http://edsitement.neh.gov/monthly_feature.asp?ID=31.

September 15—Central American Independence Day
El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Honduras celebrate their independence from Spain in 1821. For more, go to www.centralamericadaily.com/.

September 20—Mid-Autumn Festival (Harvest Moon Festival)
A legend says this Chinese holiday started when a woman became a fairy and flew to the moon to escape from her husband. On this day, families come together to eat moon cakes. For more, visit www.educ.uvic.ca/faculty/mroth/438/CHINA/moon.htm.

September 21—Chu Suk
This Korean holiday celebrates bountiful harvests. Families pick, wash, and eat the fruits, nuts, and vegetables they have planted. For more, go to www.clickasia.co.kr/about/h815.htm.

september

October

October 3—Confucius' Birthday
This year is the 2553rd birthday of Confucius, one of China's great philosophers and teachers. His birthday is also considered Teacher's Day in China. For more, see www.gio.gov.tw/info/festival_c/teacher_e/teacher.htm.

October 12—Native American Day
This holiday stresses the importance of indigenous heritage in the Americas. Native American Day replaces Columbus Day in South Dakota and is celebrated on different dates in some other states. For more, see www.smarterkids.com/rescenter/library/articles.asp?article=968&redir=true.

October 14—Chung Yeung Festival
For this nearly 2,000-year-old celebration, families organize picnics in the mountains, go hiking, and visit the relatives' graves. For more, see www.discoverhongkong.com/eng/heritage/festivals/he_fest_chun.jhtml.

Dussehra or Vijayadashami—October 15
This lively and ornate Indian national holiday celebrates the victory of good over evil. For more, visit www.meadev.nic.in/culture/festival/dussehra.htm.

october

profit organizations throughout the country. Excess computers and other equipment are placed on a website that teachers can monitor to put computers "on hold." If the DOD does not request the technology within 30 days, the school that put the computer on hold will receive it, pending review of the request. If the request is approved, the DOD contacts the school to coordinate shipping. For more information, go to www.disa.mil/cio/eipp.html or call 703/681-2400.

The Dream House Project

Due to the overwhelming number of requests for her project on building a dream house with only $100,000, Anna Denardi of Wyoming has created a website where you can take a look at the lesson plans and ideas behind the project. (Denardi's story ran in the September 2001 *NEA Today*.) The Dream House project is based on the idea that math is a practical subject used almost every day. Her lesson plans are posted at www.plt2.k12.wy.us/Pages/HighSch/Classes/Math/math.html.

Internet Educator of the Year

The Classroom Connect Internet Educator of the Year award program recognizes educators who have successfully integrated the Internet into the classroom. The award program recognizes one national and four regional winners. The national winner will be honored at Classroom Connect's spring conference and receive a $10,000 award. Submit nominations through October 31, 2002. For official rules and details, go to www.classroom.com/ieoty or call 800/638-1639.

Bring a Paleontologist to Your Classroom

Nearly 25 years ago, Dr. Bob Bakker proposed that dinosaurs had feathers, were intelligent, and were warm-blooded. Now teachers can enter to win a day with Dr. Bakker through the Jurassic Park Institute (JPI), a science-based, educational program. Visit the Teacher Resources section of the Dino Lab at www.jpinstitute.com to sign up for a chance to have Dr. Bakker spend a day with your classes. Register by October 30, 2002. The winning classroom will be randomly selected by November 20, 2002.

Free E-mail Notification Service

Guiding Beacon Solutions announces a free website service that enables schools to post notices about weather warnings, school closings, and school board meetings and events and immediately send e-mail notifications to parents and school staff. Registered schools receive instructions on how to post messages and how to get parents and staff registered. For more information, visit OnlineSchoolInfo.com.

We Love Books

Elementary students who love to read should enter the We ♥ Books! classroom bookmaking contest. To enter, an elementary school classroom must write, illustrate, and bind an original book with the title, *We ♥ Books!* The book must contain love letters, poems, and students' reasons why they love a certain book or author. The grand prize winner will receive $500 worth of free books, with $250 and $100 worth of free books going each to the second- and third-place winner. Entries must be received by November 30, 2002. For more information, visit www.econoclad.com.

Online Book Club

Your students can join the largest book club in the world by logging on to http://kwr.co-nect.net. The site allows kids to discuss literature, ask questions, and generally reflect on books that have had an impact on them. Kids from all over the world can also vote for their favorite books and meet some famous authors online. Teachers can also visit the site for literacy curriculum materials and guides.

NEA DUES-TAB Insurance Benefit Changes

Conforming to the Department of Labor Reg. §2520.104b-3, the following material modification is made to the **NEA DUES-TAB® Insurance Program**.

BENEFITS

Term Life Insurance Benefit. If death of an **Eligible Member** is due to natural causes, the benefit payable is $200 per year of **Continuous Membership** up to a **Maximum Benefit** of $1,000.

Accidental Death Insurance Benefit. If death of an **Eligible Member** is caused by an **Accident** or **Assault**, the benefit payable is $1,000 per year of **Continuous Membership** up to a **Maximum Benefit** of $5,000. The **Accidental Death Insurance Benefit** does not cover any loss which results from suicide or attempt at suicide, or an intentionally self-inflicted injury, nor does it include disease, infirmity, infection (except for pyogenic infections occurring through and at the time of a cut or wound due to accident or assault), or medical or surgical treatment thereof.

Accidental Dismemberment Insurance Benefit. In the event a **Dismemberment** of an **Eligible Member** is caused by an **Accident** or **Assault**, the benefit payable is $1,000 per year of **Continuous Membership** up to a **Maximum Benefit** of $5,000. The **Accidental Dismemberment Insurance Benefit** does not cover any loss which results from suicide or attempt at suicide, or an intentionally self-inflicted injury, nor does it include disease, infirmity, infection (except for pyogenic infections occurring through and at the time of a cut or wound due to accident or assault), or medical or surgical treatment thereof.

If you have any questions about your **Plan**, you should contact **NEA's MBC**. If you have any questions about this statement or about your rights under ERISA, or if you need assistance in obtaining documents from the **Plan Administrator**, you should contact the nearest office of the Pension and Welfare Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, listed in your telephone directory or the Division of Technical Assistance and Inquiries, Pension and Welfare Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20210. You may also obtain certain publications about your rights and responsibilities under ERISA by calling the publications hotline of the Pension and Welfare Benefits Administration. **NEA's MBC** can be reached by calling toll free 1-800-637-4636.

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in the Light Lane

Facts of Life

A few years ago, I was discussing with students a poem that dealt with the topic of relationships. I asked my morning group of 17-year-olds what they thought made for a good, solid relationship. A few of the class cut-ups shouted out "A LOT OF SEX!" Despite this, we actually had a good discussion.

When it came time for my afternoon English III class, I posed the same question. Of course, from this class, I received the same answer from a different set of cut-ups. Without thinking, I replied, "You know, guys, I had a lot of sex this morning, so let's get serious!"

The shock and amazement on students' faces and the burning red on mine had us laughing for a good 10 minutes after I explained what happened. These students have long since graduated, but I see them now and then, and they still remind me about it!

Tracey Hopper
North Arlington, New Jersey

One morning, I rang the clean-up bell and everyone started to help clean up. One of my kindergartners came up to me and asked why I didn't help them. I said, "Because I don't make the messes, and it is good practice for you to clean up after yourself."

He took one look around the room and said, "Well, you better clean up your desk then!"

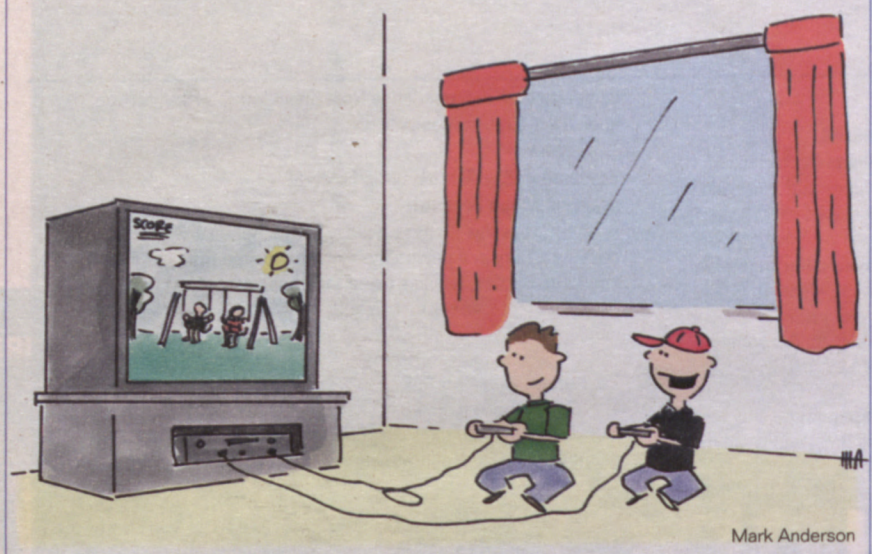
Jessie Escherich
Pickford, Michigan

I was well aware that my hair was overdue to be colored, but I was hoping my middle school classes wouldn't notice. During the Winter Olympics, one of my fifth-grade boys must have been thinking of the previous night's award ceremony. At the beginning of class, he raised his hand and asked, "Mrs. Henkiel, why is your hair both gold and silver?" Needless to say, I made it a point to dye my hair that weekend!

Jane Henkiel
Wellsboro, Pennsylvania

To help my fourth graders master spelling words, I have them use each word in a sentence. I explain to my students that each sentence should demonstrate their understanding of the meaning of the spelling word. I laughed aloud when I read this sentence a student wrote to use the word daily: "My dog gets so hungry, we have to feed him daily, nightly, and sometimes afternoonly."

Charles Koppel
Cheshire, Connecticut



Mark Anderson

"This is so cool! It almost feels like we're playing outside!"

While discussing their futures, my seniors conversed about places they wanted to visit. One spoke up and said, "I always wanted to go to Australia, where they made the *Sound of Music*." I mildly admonished with, "No, dear, that's Austria." She reproved me with eloquent sarcasm, "Yeah, like it really matters how you pronounce it."

Maureen Hurley
Atwater, California

I was introducing a unit on letter writing to my third grade. I said that I loved getting mail, but could they guess what kind of mail I got? They said "bills," and I added "junk mail." Then I said I really wanted letters from my friends. Could they guess why I never got any? (The answer was that I never wrote to my friends.) "They're all dead," quipped Jeff.

Doris Baum
New Milford, Pennsylvania

One of the terms we cover in eighth-grade science class is classification. We discuss how it is used by both scientists and other people to organize or find things or to draw conclusions. After giving some scientific examples (such as the periodic table and plants vs. animals) we moved on to some examples of classifying in the students' own homes. We discussed clothes, silverware, and their CD collections. The students who didn't use classification realized they often waste a lot of time looking everywhere for the item they wanted. Next, I wanted to see if any of them could guess how I have my record collection classified. A devilish grin came to Ryan's face as he raised his hand and said, "B.C. and A.D."

Eric Manatis-Lornell
East Sandwich, Massachusetts

I taught from 1949 to 1984, working with hundreds of students. One day I was in our village bakery. A nice looking young man came in and we greeted each other. When he walked out I said to my friend, "I think that was the father of one of my children." It didn't occur to me until later why the other customers looked at me so strangely.

Mary Picchietti
Lake Geneva, Wisconsin

I recently announced to my kindergarten students that I was expecting a baby. One of my students from last year, a current first grader, greeted me in the hall with a big hug. At this point in my pregnancy I was definitely showing and assumed that everyone knew of my pregnancy. He said to me, "Mrs. B-G, do you have a baby in your belly?" I answered, "Why yes! Can you tell?"

His reply was, "I could tell that your belly was getting bigger, but I thought that you just ate too much ice cream."

Lisa Bowen-Gotwals
Sellersville, Pennsylvania

Got Laughs?

● Have a funny school story, anecdote, or vignette you'd like to share with other NEA members? You can send contributions to:
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● Want a classroom chuckle delivered to your e-mail box once a week? Subscribe to the "In the Light Lane" mailing list. Just send an e-mail to join-lightlane@list.nea.org (no subject or message needed).

Dippy Dog

One of my students was very concerned about her dog because he was bumping into things in the house. One day she burst into the room with the news that her dog was okay. "There is nothing wrong with the dog's brain," she said. "The only problem is that he has guacamole." I assumed that was the less than scientific name for glaucoma.

Elizabeth Fairweather
Birmingham, Alabama

Recently one of my first graders was complaining that her daddy only got paid once a week. I replied, "You don't get paid every day. Mrs. Kendrick only gets paid once a month." She replied with a quizzical look, "Do you work somewhere?"

Kathy Kendrick
Kingston, Oklahoma

I was serving as an interim principal at an elementary school. At the beginning of the school day, I was making announcements over the intercom. The preschool children were not used to hearing the intercom and were quite surprised with the voice coming out of the wall. One of the students looked to the teacher and asked, "Is that God talking to us?"

John Waggoner
Paducah, Kentucky

My colleague, a history teacher, was spending the last few minutes of a period reading Trivial Pursuit cards to his eighth graders. Having just finished a unit on the American West, Ted was confident that students would know the answer to the question asking for the name of the last great Apache warrior (or words to that effect).

He was looking for "Geronimo," but no one seemed to know the answer. So Ted offered a clue: Generations of children have shouted this man's name when leaping from tree branches or diving into a swimming pool. One young lady finally raised her hand, and in a tentative voice responded, "Timber?"

Katie Wohlever
Perrysburg, Ohio

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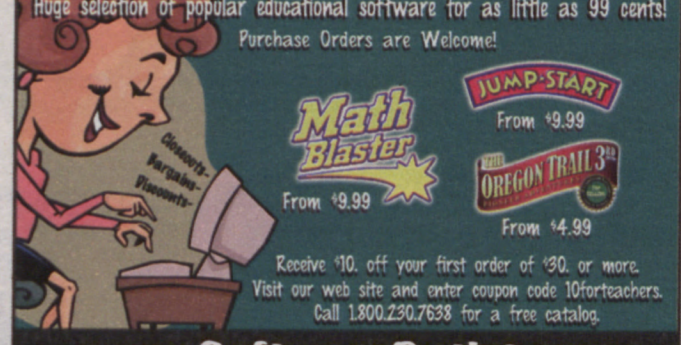

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